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Monday, February 13, 2012

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication

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Lourdine Florek, owner

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Police News

Gary Watson, 47, of Hoopeston, was arrested after a traffic stop at 12:10 a.m. Thursday behind Hoopeston Community Memorial Nursing Home, 701 E. Orange. He was charged with driving while license revoked and driving an uninsured vehicle and was released on \$150 bond with a date in traffic court.

Sasha R. Lanham, 37, of Hoopeston, was arrested after a traffic stop at 5:04 p.m. Thursday in the 300

Energy assistance applications to be taken Feb. 23 at HMA

East Central Illinois Community Action Agency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is still in the process of providing one-time energy bill payment assistance to qualified customers who have not already applied for assistance.

Energy bill assistance applications will be taken on a first come, first served basis.

Representatives will be at the Hoopeston Multi-Agency, 206 S. First Ave., on February 23, from 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. 206 South First Street.

Customers must bring the following:

- Proof of income for all household members for the past 30 days;
- A copy of their most recent energy bills; and
- Social security cards for all household members

Customers are assisted based on the availability of funds and income eligibility. Community Action serves households whose incomes are at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.

For more Information, contact: Michael Young, Associate of Planning and Community Services, East Central Illinois Community Action Agency, 56 North Vermilion Street, Danville, IL 61832, (217) 443-2705.

block of East Main. She was charged with driving while license suspended and was released on \$150 bond with a date in traffic court.

A representative of Crown Ford, 623 S. Dixie Highway, reported at 8:22 a.m. Friday that someone stole an airbag from a car on the sales lot.

A **gold bracelet** with black stones was found Friday at McDonald's. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Trevor Lange, of Gibson City, was ticketed for driving too fast for conditions after his 2000 Ford truck hit the Hoopeston VFW in the 400 block of West Orange. No injuries were reported. Lange's truck was towed from the scene.

Program set on Carnegie library

Many area residents are aware that Hoopeston Public Library, a Carnegie Library, was a gift to the citizens of Hoopeston; yet few know that Hoopeston's first request for Carnegie funding was quickly denied. What happened that allowed Hoopeston to be selected for such an honor and to receive the generous gift to construct it's library?

In the upcoming presentation, "The Secrets of the Archives: the Carnegie Years," Hoopeston's library director, Linda Mitchell, will answer that question with anecdotes, timelines and journeys revealing how the Carnegie decision was made. The Andrew Carnegie donation has become a gift that keeps giving.

The Hoopeston Historical Society at Hoopeston Public Library offers this program at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20. Refreshments will be provided.

Hoopeston's library remains a model of Carnegie design and purpose.

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Cultra's Clips: Emmanuel calls for state gun register, Caterpillar to expand outside Illi-

ONARGA—Illinois' problems with job creation were highlighted during the week when long-time Illinois company, Caterpillar, acknowledged the state's poor business and economic climate would have prevented them from considering Illinois for a significant expansion, said State Sen. Shane Cultra (R-Onarga).

In other news, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced plans to push for a statewide handgun registry that could make felons of downstate and suburban handgun owners, and the state's Medicaid program continues to draw attention.

Emanuel's February 9 call for a statewide gun registry is expected to draw fierce opposition from gun advocates and many downstate lawmakers. According to media reports, the Mayor's proposal would require all Illinois handgun owners to pay a \$65 registration fee to the state, and provide the Illinois State Police with personal information, the gun's make and model, and where and when the gun was purchased.

State gun owners are required to obtain a Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card, but the actual guns

aren't registered with the state. Penalties for violation of Emanuel's proposed legislation range from a misdemeanor charge for failure to report a lost or stolen firearm, to a felony charge for residents in possession of an unregistered gun.

Chicago already enforces a strict gun ordinance, requiring handgun owners to register with the city and pay a fee. However, the Mayor says the statewide registry will help solve crime in Chicago, citing Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives statistics showing approximately 56 percent of guns at Chicago crime scenes are from outside city limits. Gun advocates said Illinois residents are already vetted through the FOID card registration process, and criticized the hefty registration fees associated with the Mayor's proposal.

Almost a year ago, Caterpillar Inc. made headlines when a private letter from Chairman/CEO Doug Oberhelman to Gov. Pat Quinn was leaked to the media. The letter outlined concerns that the state's massive tax increase would undermine the company's ability to remain profitable. This week, fears the company would bypass Illinois for greener pastures were realized.

On February 7, an e-mail was leaked to the Peoria Journal-Star that Caterpillar - prompted by logistical deficiencies, and reinforced by the state's inhospitable tax policies and bleak budget outlook - will build the company's new North American manufacturing plant in North Carolina. In a letter to Peoria County, the CAT facility selection team cited, "previously documented concerns about the business climate and the overall fiscal health of the state of Illinois," that make it impractical to expand in Illinois.

As the largest private sector employer in the state - employing more than 23,000 Illinoisans - CAT's decision is a blow to the Peoria area and the state as a whole. In the past, Caterpillar has lamented Illinois' excessive workers' compensation costs, pointing out that the cost for an employee with an identical injury is more than

Weather

Chance of snow today, tonight. High 34, low 26. Tomorrow, chance of snow, then cloudy. High 37, low 26.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

seven times higher in Illinois than at a similar plant in Indiana. Senator Cultra said serious efforts must be made to right the state's fiscal ship, roll back the Democrats' tax increase, and reform Illinois' tedious regulatory system.

On the heels of recent criticism from Republican lawmakers, on February 7, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Julie Hamos sent a letter to the federal government outlining the department's intentions to begin implementation of commonsense Medicaid eligibility requirements passed by state lawmakers. On February 2, HFS and Quinn's administration were taken to task by Republican lawmakers for attempts to expedite expansion of the Medicaid program in Cook County, even as the administration dragged its heels on pursuing execution of the bipartisan Medicaid reforms signed into law in 2011.

Senate Republicans were pleased to see the administration pursue a more aggressive stance on Medicaid reform. The Caucus was particularly interested in DHS findings outlined in Director Hamos' letter that suggest nearly six percent of the department's monthly medical card mailings from November 2011 were returned "undeliverable with out-of-state addresses." If six percent of Medicaid recipients were deemed ineligible for benefits for failure to meet residency requirements, that would amount to approximately \$650 million in savings each year.

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