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*Your Community – Your Choice –
Your Chance*

By BERTHA PARSONS



Often I've heard people say; "It won't make any difference if I vote or not, whatever happens, happens."

Our greatest power is the power to choose: it changes lives; it moves us to make decisions now. We must choose what we think and believe is best for our lives and our community.

Everyone has a different idea or reason to vote or not to vote. Many of our grandparents, parents and children fought and many died to make sure we have the right to vote. Ever since my son, Martin, and others from this community spent time in Iraq, I do not miss a chance to vote.

Yes this is your community; every one of us (you and me) makes up this great community. Don't sit back and complain things didn't turn out the way you wanted; you have a choice by voting. This choice gives you a golden opportunity to make a difference by your vote April 7.

How blessed we are for the freedom to vote; let's not leave this vote to chance, it's too important for a tossup.

Your community, your choice, your chance; don't blow it, act now! Vote on April 7th for whoever you think is best and whatever you believe would be best for our community. YOU can be the difference. VOTE!

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Vermilion Advantage officially announces shared resource

DANVILLE— After more than a year of planning and discussing how Vermilion Advantage could add a new resource to help smaller county communities address their planning and infrastructure needs, the plan has become a reality.

Bob Westover, former deputy director of business development for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, has joined the Vermilion Advantage team as a consultant to perform these county planning functions. "I have had the pleasure of working with Vermilion Advantage in my capacity at IDCEO

over the last 11 years and know firsthand their persistence to problem solve and pull project resources together," Westover said. "My experiences and knowledge of public-sector funding resources, and experience in corporate strategic planning, prior to working with IDCEO, is critical to the purpose of this position."

The shared regional planning function is currently being funded by participating communities as well as Vermilion Advantage. Communities with formal agreements to support this resource include Hoopeston, Vermilion County, Oakwood, Muncie, Westville, Potomac and Ridge Farm. Other communities are currently discussing participation.

Vermilion Advantage and the county have each allocated \$15,000 each towards this project and participating communities are allocating \$2 per capita. Hoopeston officials approved paying \$10,702 towards the position.

"We are funding this much like we have done with our Workforce Development initiatives," said Vicki Haugen, Vermilion Advantage CEO. For 16 years, approximately 60 businesses have contributed to make programs like the Career Lab for eighth graders, Gateway to Technology, Choices, Character Counts, summer science camps and

See RESOURCE on other side

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Governor, senators, representatives work on state budget

Editor's note: State Sen. Jason Barickman has begun writing a weekly column to keep constituents updated on state government. This is the first edition of that column.

Budget negotiations have continued this week between Governor Rauner and leaders in both chambers. This year the process is a little different, because the new governor is essentially working on the finances for two fiscal years.



First he has to work out an agreement to patch a \$1.6 billion shortfall that was created by former Governor Pat Quinn's budget passed by Democrats last year. This must be done before we can approve a budget for next year.

This is a tough process, and will require legislators to make some difficult decisions. The important thing here is that our new governor is trying to finally fix the damage caused by years of mismanagement.

We must deal with the structural issues before we can hope to improve our fiscal condition, which is critical to building our economy and growing jobs. I applaud this effort and look forward to being a part of this process as it moves forward in the Senate.

If there's anything I can do for you, please don't hesitate to contact my district office at 309-661-2788.

VFW Menu
 Orange & 4th Ave., Hoopeston
 Wednesday: **Wings 5-8 p.m.**
 Thursdays: **Tacos by Norma 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5-8 p.m.**
 Fridays: **NFCC Fish Fry 11-7**
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Resource continued from other side

other STEM and career-focused activities and scholarships possible for Vermilion County public and private school students. The businesses generate funds Vermilion Advantage could not through its general membership to provide the expected resources.

"While each community has its own needs and niches, at the end of the day there are many common needs and concerns that need to be woven together in a broader, more comprehensive county plan such as housing, utilities and other infrastructure and overall quality of life," Haughen said, adding that Vermilion Advantage's economic development function has always been focused countywide, but other community factors were not being addressed due to lack of resources in smaller communities. Those other areas "significantly impact how well rural communities are positioned to take care of their current population and businesses let alone look forward to growth and change," Haugen said. It is an exciting new chapter to be able to move down this path with everyone."

Classifieds

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Hoopeston Apt. - Handicap Accessible. 2 Bedroom, 1 bath, freshly painted. All appliances, W/D hookup. Yard and full basement. Walk to shopping. No Smoking, No Pets. Available April 1. 626 S-8th Avenue. 217-260-8762. \$475 + deposit.

HELP WANTED

Seasonal driver needed at Crop Production Services Fountain Creek. Must have CDL class A or B and pass drug screen. For information call 217-375-4275 or come to 289 N 1700 East Rd Cissna Park IL 60924

Hoopeston restaurant looking for short order cook. Must be at least 18 years old and have one year of experience in a related field. Food sanitation license is a plus, but not required. Please contact 217-495-1680 and leave a detailed message with your contact information.

Full time mechanic and tire changer. Apply in person at Smitty's Dual Wheel, 8 mi. west of Rossville.

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From the Blotter

A Chicago Bears lanyard with keys was found Monday. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Obituaries

KEATON - Sandra Marie "Sandy" (McBride) Keaton, 72, of Rankin, died at 5 a.m. Sunday, March 15, 2015, at Heritage Health, Hoopeston. She was cremated. Graveside service will be at 11 a.m. Friday at Rankin Union Cemetery. Memorials are suggested to American Cancer Society. Blurton Funeral Home, Hoopeston, is in charge of arrangements.

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 47. Tonight, mostly cloudy. Low 32. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy. High 50, low 35.