By ROBERT RICHARDSON
Hoopeston Area Schools Superintendent

To all the people served by the Hoopeston Area schools, I want to give you some updates about the situation facing our area and our country concerning the COVID-19 virus and our response to the challenges surrounding it.

First and foremost, the Hoopeston Area School family takes the health and safety of our students very seriously. As of this writing there are 93 confirmed cases in our state, several of which are located in central Illinois. Cases have been confirmed in Champaign, Coles, Clinton, Whiteside, Sangamon, Woodford, and Winnebago counties, among others near the Chicago area. Along with all other public and private K-12 schools in the state, we are complying with the mandatory school closures for Tuesday March 17 to Monday March 30. As far as we know, school will be in session on Tuesday March 31.

If your student is in need of a school lunch, you may pick up a student lunch at no charge to your family, from 11 am to 1 p.m. at the following locations: 112 Coffee Shoppe, Rankin Lions Club, East Lynn Fire Station, or the Wellington post office. Lunches will be available on Tuesday March 17, Wednesday March 18, and Thursday March 19.

In addition, educational resources to allow your student to be engaged in home-based learning will be available for pick up during the lunch distribution hours. Building administrators will be available in the school buildings Monday March 16, Tuesday March 17, and Wednesday March 18, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. to allow students to pick up any needed learning materials.

Educational resources will be available for the specified days during week one of the closure, and the second week is our already-scheduled spring break. The possibility exists that the mandatory school closures will be extended, but at this time I cannot confirm anything beyond the two week closure. I will post any and all updates to See VIRUS on other side.
Weather

For real time Hoopeston weather, visit justthefacts.net/weather.

Voters to decide school sales tax, GOP auditor candidate
Will the coronavirus keep Vermilion County residents from voting? That question will be answered after the polls close on Tuesday’s primary election.

The only issue locally is a referendum whether voters will approve a countywide one percent School Facilities Sales Tax. This is the second time in two years that county school districts have asked to implement the tax. It was defeated in 2018.

In county government, two women are vying to be the Republican nominee after incumbent Bill Wright did not seek re-election. Erika Briggs, formerly Vermilion County financial resources director, and Mary Techtow, a 30-year employee of the Vermilion County Highway Department, are seeking the nod to be the Republican candidate. Whomever wins the primary will not face a Democrat in November.

If you are not affiliated with a party, you can vote in the non-partisan primary from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Virus continued from other side of page
Several area groups have made changes in their schedules to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Those changes include:

- Hoopeston Area schools: will be closed through March 30.
- Hoopeston American Legion: no bingo for two weeks. The April pancake breakfast has also been canceled.
- Hoopeston Public Library: is closed until further notice. The situation will be monitored daily. Overdue fines incurred during the shutdown will be waived. Visit hooplib.org for online resources.
- Lorraine Theatre: March movies have been canceled at the Little Lorraine. The April 4 performance of 7 Bridges has been postponed.
- City of Hoopeston: As part of its Phase 1 response to COVID-19, the McFerren Park Civic Center is closed. The situation will be monitored and changes made as warranted.
- Skaters Paradise: Due to this virus, we will do our part in helping slow the spread. We will be closed until it is safe to reopen.

This is an unprecedented situation in Illinois education, and we ask for your patience as we navigate through uncharted territory.

Having said that, I know that we, the people of Hoopeston, are ready to pull together and meet the challenge. My wife likes to say, small towns make big hearts, and we have already seen evidence of that. As I have made my way through our area this weekend, I have heard many people ask how they can help, and I am grateful to be living in a place where people take care of each other. When we are safely on the other side of this extraordinary circumstance we want to look back and say we did everything in our power to assist our towns, our state, and our nation. Stay tuned to the school website, and rest assured, we will get through this together.

COVID-19 Closings

Area Polling Places
Pools open 6 a.m.-7 p.m.

| BUTLER 1 | Rankin Fire Station | 511 S. Main | Rankin |
| GRANT 1-6 | St. Anthony Parish Hall | 423 S. Third St. | Hoopeston |
| ROSS 1-2 | Rossville Church of Christ | 514 E. Attica | Rossville |

If school officials don’t want students in class when it’s hot, why don’t they change the school year to mid-September to June?
You don’t need a tax increase to do that.

Paid Political Ad

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