

**Preserving Rural Work Ethic,
Promoting Rural Spirit,
Pioneering Progressive
Development**

HOOPESTON HORIZONS

HOOPESTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

JULY-AUGUST 2007

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- A Great Location for Web-based Business** 1-2
- Hoopeston Visioning Town Hall Meeting** 1
- Coffee and Conversation with DACC President** 2

**HOOPESTON
VISIONING TOWN
HALL MEETING:
TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 25TH**

The City of Hoopeston will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, September 25th at 7 P.M. at St. Anthony's Parish Hall. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide a report on the outcomes of the Hoopeston Visioning Process. The four high priority goal areas (infrastructure, housing, business retention and expansion, and downtown revitalization) will be discussed in detail at this meeting. You will have the opportunity to provide input into the visioning process and sign up to be involved on a committee or volunteer for various projects. We hope to see you on Tuesday, September 25th - Your involvement is important to Hoopeston's future growth! If you have questions or need additional information contact the Economic Development Office at 283-7873.

Hoopeston: A Great Location for Web-based Business Inside the Operation of Haga's Party Options

Haga's Party Options is a family owned and operated party supply business. Haga's has managed to grow and expand at a rapid rate. What began as a home-based business in 2001 operated out of one bedroom, only taking paypal orders, and only selling six party and piñata options, expanded to 210 N Market Street in 2002 and expanded yet again in 2005 with the addition of the building next door offering an extensive selection of product available online and in the store. Party Options now takes orders not only through PayPal but also US Mail, email, fax, walk-ins, merchant account, and via an 800 phone line.

The comprehensiveness of the Web Site conveys that Haga's Party Options is larger than it appears by just driving by. The company owns 14 domains, maintaining about 3,000 pages at partyoptions.net, averaging 100,000 hits a day, supported by the 10,000 square feet of warehouse. The company incorporated in 2006. All operations are handled by the 4 member family share

holders, Elsie Haga is the CEO, Nancy Wilburn – Vice President, Tess King – Executive Secretary, and Eddie



Visit Haga's Party Options at 210 North Market or online at www.partyoptions.net

Haga –Treasurer. Haga's Party Options is a member of the Better Business Bureau and Hoopeston's Chamber of Commerce. They have taught themselves basic Web Site design and the intricacies of running a successful and competitive web-based business.

Currently, Haga's serves all fifty states with occasional orders in Canada, also International orders via the embassies that represent their respective countries. Most of the store front patronage comes from a 30 mile radius. Having a wider selection of party supplies than many party stores,

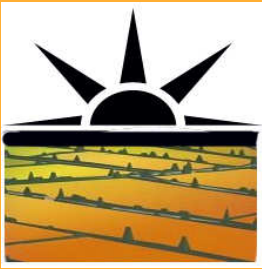
customers do come from as far as Chicago to shop in the storefront.

Haga's Party Options continues to grow and is looking into the possibility of creating a gift site online in the future. As a result of continued growth, their inventory system recently crashed from SKU overload, so they are now testing and comparing POS Systems. Haga's Party Options obtains new customers regularly through search engines and through word of mouth.

When asked about challenges Haga's faces in Hoopeston, Nancy Wilburn mentioned the lack of traffic into the downtown area and the lack of local traffic in the store. Nancy stated "Haga's Party Options would like to see more local traffic at the store. Individuals in the area can place an order online and come into the warehouse anytime we are here to pick up the order or shop in the store during regular business hours".

Haga's Party Options carry a wide selection of

(Continued on page 2)



HOOPESTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*Preserving Rural Work Ethic, Promoting Rural Spirit,
Pioneering Progressive Development*

Hoopeston: A Great Location for Web-based Business Inside the Operation of Haga's Party Options

(Continued from page 1)

party supplies for all occasions, Holidays, seasons and reasons associated merchandise, including scores of Party Themes, NFL Party Supplies, all Sports parties, 30 different colors in the Solid Color Paper and Plastic Goods, Wedding Showers, Baby Showers, Party Favors, Party Decorations, Party Games, and Catering/Serving Supplies. Haga's has recently begun a Customer Loyalty Program for the local patrons and walk-in customers. Also in the works is an online version. Although, to make a successful launch of this project a myriad of details will need worked out such as auto responder programming, subject line critiquing, text creation for value enhancing, text editing for spam filters, list management control, database integration, and so on.

Haga's Party Options finds the location of the warehouse in Hoopeston to be ideal due to the affordable building costs. The internet infrastructure is also perfect for operating a web-based company. Hoopeston could be a future location for small businesses providing an opportunity of two streams of revenue for entrepreneurs with vision. E-Commerce business can start out as small as hosting your own website on a home computer to expanding affordably with the local available properties, and support of Hoopeston's Chamber of Commerce.

Haga's Party Options currently work with 15 company reps. These companies supply product to Haga's and help them to stay informed about new products, products that are selling well, and possible competition. Nancy explained,

"An important component of running a web-based business is being competitive. We recently began offering free shipping on an order of \$75 or more to stay competitive in the tough Internet market of Party Supplies."

Online fraud is also a concern for web-based businesses. Haga's has discovered necessary measures to take along the way to minimize fraud against the company and minimize profit loss.

If you are interested in starting a web-based business in Hoopeston please contact the Economic Development Office at 217-283-7873. For more information on Haga's Party Options please contact Nancy Wilburn at: 210 North Market Street Hoopeston, IL 60942 217-283-5955 <http://www.partyoptions.net>

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION WITH DACC PRESIDENT ALICE JACOBS

Danville Area Community College invites the public to become a part of its planning process through a series of "listening" sessions intended to gain input from citizens in the district. DACC President Alice Marie Jacobs will host the first Coffee and Conversation with the President on Thursday, October 4 at 9:30 a.m. in the Community Room at MainSource Bank, 323 Main Street,

Hoopeston. Coffee and Conversation with the President/ is intended to gain the public's view of programs and services offered at DACC. Dr. Jacobs is traveling to communities in the College district to gather input from the public for the future direction of the College.

"Our mission is to provide quality, innovative, and adaptive

programs and services which meet the educational needs of our community," said Dr. Jacobs. "We cannot fully accomplish that mission without the community's input."

Coffee and Conversation with the President is free and open to the public. For more information, call the DACC Marketing Department at 217-443-8768 or 217-443-8798.