

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

HOOPESTON HORIZONS

HOOPESTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 JANUARY—FEBRUARY 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Café Delights Now 1

Main Street Day at the Capital 1

RCDI Grant Underway 2

2008 Relay for Life of Vermilion County 2

What is Affordable Housing? 3

2008 Great American Cleanup 4

Hoopeston Web Site Improvements 4

Upcoming Hoopeston Events

- ◆ March 15th—16th: Hoopeston Business Expo
- ◆ March 29th: Fireman's Ball
- ◆ April 18th: Quilts for Kids Day

For more event information visit the community calendar at: www.hoopeston-il.gov

Café Delights Now Open in Hoopeston

The City of Hoopeston is "Delighted" to have a new café in the downtown! Hoopeston residents, Amy and Don Davis have wanted to open a business in Hoopeston for a long time. They looked at a variety of locations in Hoopeston and settled on the former bakery located at 417 South Market Street. The bakery closed in 2004 but the facility remained in good condition with the equipment in operable condition.

Café Delights opened in Hoopeston in the beginning

of January. The menu includes expresso drinks, coffees and teas, donuts,



Michael Davis removes tray of cookies from the oven.

Picture taken by Matt Huber, Commercial News.

bagels, brownies, breakfast sandwiches, soups, salads, sandwiches, and more.

Their coffee is fresh roasted right here in Central Illinois.

The café also serves 24 flavors of soft serve ice cream. The ice cream is available on a cone, dish, as a sundae, brownie delight, banana flip, turtle delight, or milkshake.

On your next visit to Hoopeston stop in at Café Delights to enjoy a coffee, baked item, breakfast or lunch!

Main Street Day at the Capital



On Thursday, February 21st Hoopeston volunteers gathered in Springfield to display information about Hoopeston's downtown, talk with visitors, and network with other Main Street communities.

This was an opportunity for

the City of Hoopeston to showcase the history, heritage, and current developments within the community. The corn soap packets provided by a local farmer and the Hoopeston "Cornjerker" carved blocks created by the high school students were a big hit!

Visitors were also impressed by some of the historic buildings in Hoopeston's downtown and the streetscape design highlighting the potential future changes in the downtown area.



Those that attended walked away with many great ideas including event possibilities, banner designs, and marketing ideas that can be implemented here in Hoopeston to enhance the downtown district.

RCDI Grant Underway

The Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce is one of eleven recipient organizations of the most recent Rural Community Development Initiative Grant (RCDI) through USDA Rural Development. This grant is being facilitated by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) and began February 1, 2008.

The overall goal of this three year RCDI grant is to provide a *“program of financial and technical assistance services that will enhance the capacity of recipients to successfully undertake projects”* specifically in the area of **community sustainability**. By increasing the knowledge and skills of the Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce they will be able to support sustainable rural revitalization efforts in Hoopeston on an ongoing basis. Ultimately, this will serve to improve the quality of life for residents in Hoopeston.

Rural communities, such as Hoopeston, face significant economic trends with competition from off-shore locations for jobs and from large discount stores or retail centers for main street business. Secondary school graduates often leave for better paying jobs leaving many communities with an aging population, fewer school age residents, and loss of retail businesses, sometimes due to pending retirements with an apparent buyer. Community and economic development (CED) organizations and local governments rely heavily on part-time or volunteer support and operate on an annual basis with relatively little time spent on building a long-term financial support base. This situation makes it difficult to maintain a multi-year initiative for community and economic development.

To address these rural economic trends, the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs will provide training and other technical assistance to the Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce in four main endeavors, depending on needs and interests within the community. The IIRA will provide assistance in the following areas:

- Fostering Youth Retention and Entrepreneurship
- Creating Community Foundations and Endowments
- Developing Community Marketing Strategies
- Improving Business Sustainability and Intergenerational Business Transfers

The Chamber of Commerce is in the process of assessing Hoopeston businesses and residents to determine the areas of highest priority and will place focus on those areas.

2008 Relay for Life of Vermilion County

Each year, across the nation, one event brings together entire communities to take part in the fight against cancer. That event is the American Cancer Society Relay For Life. It's a time and place where people come to celebrate those who have survived cancer, remember those we've lost, and fight back against a disease that touches too many lives.

This year's Vermilion County Relay for Life event will be held June 21-22 at Ellsworth Park in Danville. There are plenty of opportunities for involvement either by participating on a team



or by volunteering to help with planning activities or with the actual event.

Team captain meetings will be held at 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the

Renaissance Banquet Center, 440 N. Walnut St. in Danville. Anyone interested in participating also is welcome to attend these meetings, which started Tuesday, Jan. 22.

This year's theme is "Celebrate. Remember. Fight Back.". To register your team online, visit www.relayforlifevermilion.com.

For more information, please call Publicity Chairperson Dana Schaumburg at 217-497-3614 or email her at

dschaumburg@hotmail.com.

What is Affordable Housing?

The City of Hoopston has been assessing the availability and condition of existing housing to determine whether quality affordable housing exists for all residents. Housing is the single largest expenditure for most American families. An adequate supply of housing is directly related to the economic and social health of a community, and the failure to provide a balanced housing stock can result in significant societal costs.

Hoopston, like many other Illinois rural communities has experienced a shortage of affordable housing. Questions have arisen as to what constitutes affordable housing.

Affordable housing refers to households' ability to find housing within their financial means. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing and certain utilities (electric, gas, and water) are considered to experience *cost burden*. If paying more, a family will have insufficient funds to cover other basic necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, health and childcare. The median income for a family of 2.44 in the Hoopston area is \$31,947 (Census 2000).

Low-income housing refers to housing for "low income" households. HUD considers a household low-income if it earns 80% or less of median family income. In short, low-income housing is targeted at households that earn 80% or less of median family income. It is important to understand that many households that experience cost burden have jobs and are otherwise

productive members of society. A household earning 80% of median family income in Hoopston earns about \$25,560 annually—or about \$12.25 per hour for a full-time employee.

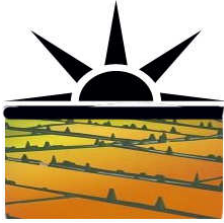
These definitions mean that any household can experience cost burden and that affordable housing applies to **ALL** households in an area. Low-income housing, however, targets low-income households. In other words, a community can have a housing affordability problem that does not include only low-income households.

Subsidized housing is made affordable by the contribution of Federal, State, Local or Private funding. The "subsidy" buys down the cost of the home for the occupant, whether it is designated for ownership or rental. Housing can be subsidized in numerous ways—giving tenants a rent voucher, helping homebuyers with down-payment assistance, reducing the interest on a mortgage, providing deferred loans to help developers acquire and develop property, giving tax credits to encourage investment in low- and moderate-income housing, authorizing tax-exempt bond authority to finance the housing, providing ongoing assistance to reduce the operating costs of housing and others. Public housing, project-based Section 8, Section 8 vouchers, tax credits, the State Housing Trust Fund, Community Development Block Grants, System Development Charge waivers, reduced fees to the local government, and local grants are all examples of subsidized housing. Subsidized housing can range from ownership to apartments. Subsidized housing

is typically targeted to low- to extremely-low income households and requires a term of continued affordability (typically 30 years or more).

Section 8 housing vouchers, now referred to as Housing Choice Vouchers, subsidize low-income families so that they can afford decent and safe housing in the private market. Vouchers are not an entitlement and only a small percentage of eligible applicants receive them—most are put on a waiting list when they apply. Recipients may select any housing with rent at or below the "fair market rent" set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), if the owner agrees to accept the voucher as payment. The family pays 30 percent of its income toward rent and utilities. Families that select housing that costs more than the fair market rent must pay the difference. Housing Choice vouchers are federal benefits distributed by local public housing authorities (PHAs). The national government makes most key policy decisions and provides funds for vouchers as well as administration costs. Income eligibility limits and fair market rents vary by locality—based on area median income and local rent prices respectively—but they are determined at the federal level by HUD. PHAs have some control over establishing priorities in serving applicants.

More information will be available in the next newsletter describing the availability of affordable housing in Hoopston and addressing what new possibilities exist for additional affordable housing.



HOOPESTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

301 West Main Street

Hoopeston, IL 60942

Phone: 217-283-7873

Fax: 217-283-7965

E-mail: shannon_ruh@hoopeston.org

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

We're on the web!
www.hoopeston-il.gov

2008 Great American Cleanup April 19th

Volunteers are invited to clean up litter, prune trails, clean along the lake and the river, plant trees, and paint picnic tables and outhouses at Kickapoo State Park. Registration begins at 8 a.m., work begins at 8:30am and lunch will be at 12:30 p.m. Lunch

To volunteer, call Paul Sermersheim at 217-304-8821. To donate supplies, snacks, and prizes, call Lynn Wolgamot at 217-431-2662.

All other questions can be directed to Planning Committee Chairperson Dana Schaumburg at 217-497-3614 or dschaumburg@ourhouseworks.com.

Hoopeston Web Site Improvements

Allan Simpson with Simpson Design has converted the City Web Site to a content management system. We have updated the web site and have added many new features.

We are working on formatting the community calendar and working out a few of the bugs. We have tried to integrate all the suggestions and ideas that have been provided to determine what to put on the web site. We can add information to the web site and make changes daily.

If you have additional suggestions of items that you would like to see on the web site please let me know. If you have events for your organization or business that you would like on the community calendar please email those to me. If your business or organization has web site and it is not currently linked to the City Web Site please provide the web address so it can be linked.

We are working on creating a community forum and a volunteer database. These features will be available in the

near future!

We want to be sure that the web site is informative for those outside of the community that are looking for information about Hoopeston and also an interactive space for the community and visitors to provide feedback and bounce ideas.

Visit the City web site at www.hoopeston-il.gov. Please email feedback, calendar events, and other ideas to shannon_ruh@hoopeston.org.