



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

HOOPESTON HORIZONS

HOOPESTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Upcoming Hoopeston Events

◆ June 21st: Drivin' the Dixie Day

For more Drivin' the Dixie and other event information visit the community calendar at: www.hoopeston-il.gov

New Restaurant Opens in Hoopeston

Mark and Amanda Mezo from Covington Indiana have always wanted to start a restaurant of their own. Both Mark and Amanda have experience in the restaurant industry. Mark has worked in the restaurant business



for 9 years and was employed as a cook at Benjamins in Covington, IN for the last 4 years. Amanda also worked at Benjamins as a waitress.

Recognizing Hoopeston's need for a family style restaurant, Mark and Amanda opened Papa's Family Restaurant located at



329 West Main Street across from Silgan Container. Papa's provides quality food, made from scratch, with family hospitality and affordable prices.

Papa's has hired 15 employees and has seen steady traffic since their opening on April 14th. Amanda is responsible for customer relations and business operations and Mark handles the cooking. Papa's hosted an open house on April 13th where they provided meals for Chamber of Commerce and City Officials to acquaint them with the menu and the hospitality that the

restaurant would provide to the community. Papa's serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner with the breakfast menu available all day long. The menu includes both Italian and American dishes from pasta to seafood.



Mark and Amanda have moved to Hoopeston and have enrolled their children in summer baseball leagues in town. They are happy to be part of the community and invite you in to sample the great food and family hospitality that Papa's offers to the Hoopeston area!

Drivin' the Dixie Day Planned

The Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce is currently planning the 3rd annual Drivin the Dixie Festival, which will take place on Saturday, June 21st from 8am - 3pm in McFerren Park.

The Chamber is expanding the number of activities

offered as part of this regional event.



In celebration of Illinois' first State Highway: first known as Hubbard Trace, then State Route 1, followed by the Dixie Highway, fifteen communities along a 120 mile stretch of the Dixie highway join together for a vintage car tour once a year on the 3rd Saturday in June.

Drivin' the Dixie Events Planned

Enjoy a leisurely drive in your vintage or modern car along the Historic Dixie Highway. Visit historic sites, specialty shops, antique shops, restaurants, and community events. Start the tour



north at Blue Island or from the south in Danville. Stop where you please for as long as you like. Obtain a passport to be stamped in each town along the journey to be eligible for prizes awarded at the end of the day in Momence.

Hoopeston celebrates this event with a variety of activities in McFerren Park, along the Dixie Highway. From flea markets and yard sales to sporting events and kids games, Hoopeston has something fun for the whole family! Hoopeston will be adding a Dixie Derby (race using pinewood cars) and a Poochie Pageant (beauty pageant for dogs) to the schedule of events for this year. Danville will be hosting a

Dixie Dash and offering first, second, and third place cash prizes to the oldest cars that travel from Danville to Momence.

Hoopeston Schedule of Events Includes:

- ◆ Flea Market, 8 X 10 space is \$5 and set up begins at 7am. Call the Hoopeston Chamber Office at 217-283-7873 to reserve your space today!



- ◆ Children's Fishing Derby 9am—11am

- ◆ Dixie Derby - Weigh in at 10am and race begins at 12pm. There is a \$30 Entry Fee (Car, T-shirt, and Drink Ticket). Funds



raised will benefit Hoopeston Main Street. Visit www.hoopeston-il.gov to register for this event.

- ◆ Poochie Pageant - Registration at 9am and the



pageant begins at 10am. There is a \$10 Entry Fee. All funds raised for this event will benefit Hoopeston Main Street. Visit www.hoopeston-il.gov to register for this event.

- ◆ Pictures with Miss Hoopeston - 1pm - 3pm. There is a \$3 Charge for pictures.
- ◆ Fire Department Water Wars - 11am
- ◆ Car and Motorcycle Show: All Day
- ◆ Hoopeston Jaycees Dunktank: All Day
- ◆ Rotary Ice Cream: All Day
- ◆ Lion's Club Fish Fry: Starts at 10am
- ◆ Face Painting and Other Childrens Events - 10am - 2pm

Don't forget to stop in Hoopeston as you make your trek along the Dixie!

Hoopeston Receives Safe Routes to School Funding

The City of Hoopeston has received \$12,350 through the Illinois Safe Routes to School Program. The funding will allow for increased enforcement measures in close proximity to the schools. The City Police Department will purchase three speed feedback trailers to be used in front of all Hoopeston

schools. The schools will partner with the City to place and store the portable trailers each day. The trailers will be used to gather speed related data and assess the travel environment around the schools to allow for increased enforcement where needed. The City and the Hoopeston School District will also survey the

students on their travel mode to and from school and obtain parent feedback regarding the safety of the travel environment to and from school. The City believes this initiative will help increase safety of students traveling to and from school.

Hoopeston Public Library Promoting Economic Development

The Hoopeston Public Library has been included as a partner for the Western Illinois University Program, "Expanding the Entrepreneurial Role for Rural Libraries." WIU libraries, in cooperation with the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Alliance Library System and Western Illinois Entrepreneurial Center, recently received a Library Services and Technology



Act grant project funded through the Illinois Office of the Secretary of State to administer the economic stimulus program.

This grant project will:

- Provide pilot training programs to build the capacity of librarians and economic development professionals to build their capacity to respond more effectively to queries about entrepreneurship and community development.
- Promote rural libraries as crucial access points for information needed to support effective public and private development decisions.
- Enhance rural libraries roles

as local public spaces to hold meetings, educational training, and other activities related to community development and entrepreneurship.

For more information on this grant and additional resources related to the role of rural libraries in economic development visit the Alliance Library Systems Web Site at www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/Rural/index.cfm

The Hoopeston Public Library is a significant contributor to local economic development. As a result of global business trends, Hoopeston is changing from a predominantly manufacturing base to a service and idea base driven by small business development. Hoopeston has been working on identifying and marketing community assets to become competitive in this new economy.

The Hoopeston public library is one of the community's greatest assets and is an integral part of community and economic development with the "New Economy" focus on people and quality of life. The Hoopeston Public Library is a hub of community activity due to an inviting atmosphere, accessibility, extended hours, openness to local partnerships, readily available community information, and plenty of space for public meetings. The library recently hosted a Chamber Business After Hours to showcase many of the new resources available to Hoopeston businesses and residents.

The Hoopeston Public Library offers a wide array of services to



Assistant director Linda Mitchell displaying some of the many resources for entrepreneurs

the community:

Public Wireless Hot Spot

- Copier and fax machine
- Children's programs
- Public Meeting Space
- Handicap Accessible
- Your library card allows you to use both library resources and online resources through the available search engines.
- Numerous business and entrepreneurial resources
- 8 computer stations for work processing or online access
- Click here for a list of additional library services

The Hoopeston Public Library is open 24 hours online at www.hooplib.org/. Books can be ordered through available online search engines. Please come visit the Hoopeston Library today!

City of Hoopeston Obtains Second VISTA

On Friday, February 9, 2008 Judi Benjamin began her position as the VISTA Coordinator for the newly created Hoopeston Main Street Program and coordinator for the new Rural Community Development Initiative Grant (RCDI) focused on business sustainability and marketing. When asked about her thoughts on her new position she explained, "I am excited with Hoopeston's designation as an Associate Main Street Community. As Main Street Coordinator, I look forward to working with the businesses and property owners in developing a comprehensive plan to guide Hoopeston's downtown revitalization."

As part of the RCDI Grant through the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce will focus on two priority goal areas as part of business sustainability and marketing. These goals include:

Goal 1: To encourage and promote increased entrepreneurship training among the youth (middle and high school) in Hoopeston



**VISTA Coordinator for
Hoopeston Main Street
Program and RCDI Grant**

Goal 2: Develop a City of Hoopeston marketing plan

Judi will assist in facilitating the projects that will be undertaken to accomplish the above goals. Judi is excited to be a part of this grant.

When asked about business sustainability and marketing, Judi explained "In order to retain businesses in the community, the youth need to be encouraged to create business plans and be mentored in the process of starting a business. For the Hoopeston business climate to truly be sustained well into the future, it is vital that the youth are included in plans for business creation and business succession. There also needs to be a means in place to encourage young families to return to the community and start businesses in Hoopeston." In closing Judi explained, "Hoopeston needs the vitality that the younger generation possesses."

City of Hoopeston Continues to Expand Web Site WWW.HOOPESTON-IL.GOV

The City of Hoopeston continues to modify and update the Hoopeston Web Site to make it a one stop location of all community information for prospective businesses as well as community residents. The City has added extensive resources for entrepreneurs interested in starting a business in Hoopeston. Visit this link at <http://www.hoopeston-il.gov/index.php/development/economic-development/starting-a-business>

A community calendar is another recent addition to the City Web Site. Community businesses and organizations can now promote

their meetings and events through the City Web Site. Individuals interested in visiting Hoopeston can find upcoming event information on the community calendar and under the tourism section of the Web Site.

To promote products made in Hoopeston or unique to Hoopeston, the City has added a section for Hoopeston products. To purchase Cornjerker T-Shirts, corn soap, or Sweetcorn Festival gear visit <http://www.hoopeston-il.gov/index.php/hoopeston-products>.

The City has also added a

guestbook to the web site to encourage residents and visitors to share their thoughts about what Hoopeston has to offer. Stop by the City Web Site today and add your feedback to the community guestbook!

It is our hope that you will find all the information necessary to plan a trip to Hoopeston, move to Hoopeston, or relocate your business in Hoopeston. If you need additional information there is a contact form to allow users to ask specific questions and City staff will respond promptly to all inquiries.

Hoopeston Residents Receive Awards for Development Efforts

A local resident and a community organization received awards from Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs' MAPPING the Future of Your Community program for their efforts to improve the



Gisele Hamm from the IIRA presents the Community Champion Award to Jean Minick at the Hoopeston City Council Meeting

quality of life in their community. Jean Minick, Hoopeston community resident and VISTA volunteer with the City of Hoopeston received the 2008 Vision to Action Community Champion Award, and the Mayor's Youth Council received the 2008 Vision to Action Award for Community Teamwork at IIRA's 19th Annual Conference for Rural Community Economic Development. Jean and the Council were nominated by a Hoopeston resident and were selected by MAPPING staff from a group of nominees.

The conference is sponsored by Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Rural Partners. MAPPING (Management and Planning Program Involving Non-metropolitan Groups), a community-driven strategic visioning and planning program at the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University, began presenting awards at the annual conference two years ago to honor outstanding rural community organizations and volunteers in MAPPING communities for their community and economic development efforts. Other awards presented at this year's conference included "Innovative Project" to 321 Art Gallery, Savanna and "Professional Partner" to Sara Montemayor, Corporation for National and Community Service.

"A community's greatest asset is its people and this is no exception in the City of Hoopeston," says Gisele Hamm, Manager, MAPPING program. "Hoopeston can be proud that two of the Vision to Action Awards were presented to their community this year." The community has many great residents that work daily to improve the living and working environment in the City. Jean

Minick and the youth involved in the Mayor's Youth Council exemplify the enthusiasm, passion, dedication, hard work, innovation, and vision that are needed to revitalize the City of Hoopeston. Both Jean and the Youth Council have worked hard on development efforts resulting in accomplishments that would not be possible without their drive and dedication to improve the community through new ideas and new initiatives. From



Mayor Bill DeWitt receives the Community Teamwork Award on behalf of the Mayor's Youth Council from Gisele Hamm from the IIRA

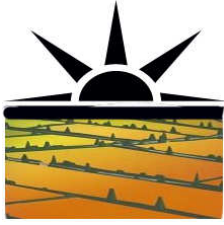
developing a community wide vision, to conducting a housing assessment, to establishing a mentoring program through Big Brothers Big Sisters, to creating a Youth Center on Saturday nights, the quality of life in Hoopeston has been enhanced as a result of their efforts.

AmeriCorps Week Activity May 11– 18

In preparation for AmeriCorps week VISTA Volunteers Judi Benjamin and Jean Minick organized a presentation for the Hoopeston Historical Society to inform community residents about their work in Hoopeston and benefits VISTA provides to the City. Americorps VISTA

(Volunteers in Service to America) provides volunteers to help fight poverty through community service. AmeriCorps Service week is a time to bring more Americans into service, show appreciation to VISTA volunteers and thank community partners. The City of Hoopeston

appreciates the hard work, energy, and new ideas that VISTA Volunteers Jean Minick and Judi Benjamin provide and are happy to have additional community involvement in development efforts.



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

Sites and Buildings Available in Hoopeston

The City of Hoopeston has several commercial and industrial sites and buildings available. In partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the City of Hoopeston has generated a comprehensive site and building database that meets the national standards set forth by site selection professionals. Industrial building information, commercial building information, warehousing information, and available site information is provided on the City Web Site at: <http://www.hoopeston-il.gov/index.php/development/economic-development/available-property>

We have ready sites with utilities on site. We have identified four sites for industrial development and are currently conducting due diligence on the site of highest priority, the South Rail Site. This site is located immediately south of the Hoopeston,

IL city limits and contains 216.35 acres. It is served by railroad, along the western boundary of the site and is bordered by an 80,000 pound capacity road on the south, east, and north sides of the site. Sewer, gas, and electric are either on site or in close proximity to the site with a gas substation 2200 ft. from the site.



The City of Hoopeston has several commercial sites ranging from 2 acres to 4 acres in close proximity to the intersections of IL Routes 1 and 9, adjacent to the existing commercial district. If you are looking for a location to start a business, come visit Hoopeston where we are happy to assist you with business startup or relocation.

The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs has created an online site selection tool to assist businesses in identifying possible sites throughout the State. This tool allows the user to map electric transmission lines, substations, and environmental features. Visit: www.illinoisiteselectiontool.org to begin the site selection process.

Visit www.hoopeston-il.gov for more site information, building information, and community data.