

# Armed

Continued from Page 1A

officials to arm staff and grants qualified immunity for those who are OK'd to carry a weapon on school grounds. Lawmakers said they believed giving school staff qualified immunity would ease the insurance issue.

Perry Community School District — which is still dealing with the aftermath of the shooting — has not considered whether to arm staff.

“The new law has not been discussed by the board,” board President Linda Andorf said.

Around the Des Moines metro, school officials are weighing next steps.

An Iowa Poll conducted in late February showed that 60% of Iowans supported arming school staff, including teachers. More than 30 states allow schools to arm staff.

Earlier this month, Gov. Kim Reynolds signed House File 2586 into law.

Des Moines schools' decision not to arm staff comes at a time when officials are focusing on overall district security and cybersecurity.

Security became a priority heading into the current 2023-24 school year, following deadly shootings at East High School in 2022 and Starts Right Here alternative school in January 2023.

The district was also closed for several days in early 2023 because of a ransomware attack.

In response, the Des Moines School Board significantly increased what the district spends on overall security for the current 2023-24 school budget.

Some of the increased budget went to expanding the district's full-time public safety staff.

“We believe that the role of our teachers is to educate our students and the role of the district is to keep our students, teachers and staff safe,” Des Moines School Board Chair Jackie Norris said.

House File 2586 also requires larger schools to employ a school resource officer but allows school boards to opt out. Des Moines school officials have no plans to bring back school resource officers.

The district discontinued its school resource officer contract with the Des Moines Police Department in 2021 following an audit that showed Black students were more likely than their white peers to have an interaction with law enforcement at school.

The district's safety plan involves a mix of measures, including campus monitors, “targeted restorative justice approaches,” which help staff handle issues as they arise, building improvements and updated technology, Norris said.

“I think our teachers are our caregivers in the classroom,” Norris said. “And I think that is the role that they want to play and have signed up to play. And quite honestly, I haven't heard from a single teacher or community member that has asked us to equip our teachers with guns at this time.”

The Johnston School Board's three-member policy committee met Wednesday to discuss House File 2586.

“District board policy 502.6 currently prohibits weapons on school district property,” said Lynn Meadows, Johnston Community School District's spokesperson.

The policy committee discussion focused on making edits to clarify board policy, she said.

The proposed revisions suggest dis-

trict officials will continue to prohibit weapons on school district property, Meadows said.

A final decision is expected to be made by the Johnston School Board at its May 6 meeting.

Waukee and Urbandale school districts are both planning to prohibit staff, other than law enforcement, from carrying firearms on school grounds.

Both school boards are expected to take up the issue in May.

On Feb.19, the Urbandale School Board “unanimously approved a resolution supporting greater education and awareness on the proper storage of firearms,” school board President Jason Menke said.

Officials will need to update the student handbook to include “information about adults' legal obligations regarding the secure storage of firearms, and to provide parents with information about secure storage at student registration.”

“I don't believe we'll have armed teachers in Urbandale in the near future,” Menke said.

Laine Buck, spokesperson for the West Des Moines Community School District, said, “We have not made any decisions regarding this decision,” but the district does already have several school resource officers through the West Des Moines and Clive police departments who have been in place for several years.

At Ankeny and Dallas Center-Grimes school districts, officials are still reviewing the law with legal teams and insurance companies.

Ankeny officials are “reviewing the language of the new law to determine the policy, funding and operational implications,” said Samantha Aukes, Ankeny Community School District's spokesperson.

Officials in the North Polk district have not decided on policy while awaiting further guidance from the district's attorneys.

“There is still a lot of ambiguity surrounding this matter, and we want to ensure we do our due diligence before deciding a path forward around such a sweeping change,” North Polk spokesperson Hunter Fleshner said.

Education officials and advocates said they appreciate that the new law gives school districts the opportunity to choose security measures that are right for their district.

“As a parent who sends their kid to school every day, I think I join with just about every other parent in this country that is worried about the safety of our children in a school building,” Norris said.

“And it is an issue that should be at the forefront of every single school district, but it should be left up to the school district to address that issue in a way that best works for them.”

The Iowa State Education Association was among those who registered against the bill, said President Mike Beranek.

“We do not agree that it's appropriate to be arming our educators in our buildings when there are many other avenues which districts can utilize to ensure that our children are safe,” Beranek said. “It is incredibly important that local control is paramount in this bill.”

*Reporters Phillip Sitter and Chris Higgins contributed to this story.*

*Samantha Hernandez covers education for the Register. Reach her at (515) 851-0982 or svhernandez@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter at @svhernandez or Facebook at facebook.com/svhernandezreporter.*

erage Waukee household.

“This minimal increase will help keep up with increased operation and system costs,” according to the city's news release.

*Phillip Sitter covers the western suburbs for the Des Moines Register. Phillip can be reached via email at psitter@gannett.com or on X, formerly known as Twitter, at @pslifeisabeauty.*

## AROUND THE COUNTY

### Staff Report

### Care Closet

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. May 3-4 at Crossroads Church.

The Crossroads Church Care Closet will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, May 3 and Saturday, May 4. Everything is free!

### Bouton Breakfast

7-10 a.m. Saturday, May 4 at Bouton Community Center.

Come enjoy an all-you-can-eat breakfast with sausage, ham, eggs, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, hash browns, toast and drinks. The cost is \$9 for adults and \$5 for kids ages 5-12, under 5 are free. Bake sale items will also be available. This will be the last breakfast this spring. Save the date for future breakfasts on Oct. 5, Nov. 2 and Dec. 7.

### Safety Bike Rodeo

9-11 a.m. Saturday, May 4 at Adel City Hall parking lot, 301 S 10th St., Adel.

Children ages 5-12 are invited to bring their bicycles and helmets, along with their parent(s), to participate in the 5th Annual Safety Bike Rodeo on Saturday, May 4. This come-and-go event is free and offers interactive activities for children, free giveaways and a drawing for prizes. Children completing the safety course will receive a certificate of completion, bike safety information, a Rotary flyer, an icee and a bottle of water. Other activities include tours of a police car and a fire engine and to visit with an Adel Police Officer and Adel Firefighters.

### Plant Sale

9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Saturday, May 4 at Dallas County Fairgrounds Community Building, 28061 Fairground Dr. Adel.

The Dallas County Master Gardeners plant sale will return on Saturday, May 4. All proceeds will benefit the Dallas County Master Gardeners' demonstration garden. The event is open to the public. Items for sale will include perennials, annuals, vegetables, house plants, succulents, horticulture books, pre-potted arranged plants, plant containers and garden art.

### Ham Ball Dinner

11:30 a.m. Sunday, May 5 at Dexter United Methodist Church.

Dexter United Methodist Church will host a ham ball dinner on Sunday, May 5. The menu includes ham balls or meat loaf, cheesy potatoes, green beans and pie. Dine in or carry-out options are available. Call 515-250-9012 for curbside pickup. A free-will offering will be taken.

### Woodward Social Center Lunch

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Monday, May 6 at Woodward Social Center.

The Woodward Social Center will serve a luncheon on Monday, May 6. The menu includes sloppy joes, potato salad, baked beans and dessert. A free-will offering will be taken.

### Adel Community Blood Drive

9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 8 at 312 Nile Kinnick Drive S, Adel.

LifeServe Blood Center donors are true life savers! When blood donors roll up their sleeves, it only takes one hour to donate one pint of blood, which will save the lives of up to three local hospital patients. Become a hero today by donating blood! Sign up to give the gift of life at an upcoming blood drive near you. The Adel Community Blood Drive will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 8. Schedule a blood donation appointment online at lifeservebloodcenter.org or call 800.287.4903.

### Free Community Supper

5:30-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 8 at Heartland Church of Christ, 14417 J Ave, Perry. All are welcome to join us at Heartland Church of Christ, just west of Hy-Vee, for supper on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. - no charge. Dine in or

carry out. Handicap accessible.

### Fiber Festival of Perry Retreat Classes

Thursday, May 9 in Perry.

This year the Fiber Festival of Perry won't be just one day of awesome booths and demonstrations; we're adding a 3-Day Fiber Retreat to kick off the weekend with classes, demonstrations, knowledge sharing and community! The Class Pass only includes access to the class you select. No rooms, meals, swag, or other activities are included with purchase of this pass. Additional spots are open for the classes on Thursday, May 9, which include classes for crocheters, weavers and knitters. Find more information and purchase tickets at atelier-at1109.com/products/thursday-retreat-classes.

### May Sip & Shop

4-7 p.m. Friday, May 10 at Perry businesses.

Enjoy an after-hours shopping experience at Perry Businesses on Friday, May 10. Shop warm-weather apparel, décor, gifts and more while sipping complimentary refreshments at each location! Find more information on the Perry Chamber's Facebook page.

### Mother's Day Weekend Hike

10-11 a.m. Saturday, May 11 at Voas Nature Area.

Let's celebrate the moms of our world with a hike at Voas Nature Area! On the Saturday morning of Mother's Day Weekend, we'll take a walk and discuss how some wild mothers take care of their own young. Registration is required through DCCB's Eventbrite page.

### Fiber Festival of Perry

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday, May 11 at Hotel Pattee.

This year's Fiber Festival of Perry will include three beginner classes, including Beginning Drop Spindle, Beginner Knitting, and 2D Needle Felting! Tickets are available at www.atelier-at1109.com. Visit the Hotel Pattee for our amazing selection of local vendors that will have yarns, spinning wheels, drop spindles, woven and knit goods, fiber arts supplies and so much more for sale. Plus view quilts and learn from the members of the Perry Piecemakers Quilt Guild in lower level as well as demonstrations by the Des Moines Weavers and Spinners Guild in the Courtyard Cafe. Twisted Sunset Sisters Fiber Mill will host an open house from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on May 11. Swing by 1118 W 3rd St. in Perry and see how fluff becomes yarn. Atelier at 1109 artists have created a yarn bomb display located at 1109 2nd St. and Soumas Court in downtown Perry. This display not only includes the annual lightposts decorated in new handknit wrappings, but an approximate 14 ft x 14 ft crocheted display and numerous themed fiber pieces throughout Soumas Court to go along with this year's theme, Alice in Fiberland.

### Wall of Witnesses Nominations

Saturday, May 15.

Hometown Heritage is taking nominations for the 2024 Wall of Witnesses. Nomination forms can be picked up at the Carnegie Library Museum or online at hometownheritage.org/wall-of-witnesses-nomination.html. The deadline for new nominations is May 15.

### Job Fair

12-5 p.m. Thursday, May 16 at National Guard Armory, 2930 Willis Ave., Perry. A job fair will be held on Thursday, May 16 for impacted Tyson employees. Nearly 100 employers will be on hand looking to hire employees. If you require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the event, contact Sara Bath by May 10 at sara.bath@iwd.iowa.gov. For more information, email DesMoinesIowa-WORKS@iwd.iowa.gov or call 515-281-9619.

*To submit events to be included in the Around the County round-up, email news@adelnews.com or news@theperrychief.com.*

# Budget

Continued from Page 1A

## Budget includes stormwater rate increase

The City Council has approved a 2.1% monthly billing increase for stormwater and solid waste for the av-

# Dallas County News

## HOW TO CONTACT US

**Our office:** 400 Locust St. Ste. 500, Des Moines, IA 50309.

As a safety measure during the pandemic, the office is not open to in-person business at this time.

**Circulation:** circulation@amestrib.com

### Director of Sales

Chad Giddens  
cgiddens@localiq.com

### Classifieds/Obituaries

515-465-4666 - DallasNewsObits@Gannett.com

### Editor

Allison Ullmann (515) 465-4666  
aullmann@theperrychief.com

### General News/Sports

news@adelnews.com

### Legals

legals@amestrib.com

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