



# The Gazette

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

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## Crackdown on crime

Police increase enforcement after violence, attack on officer

By Adam Belz

The Gazette

**CEDAR RAPIDS** — With sweeping patrols and vigorous enforcement of even small infractions, police are cracking down on sections of Cedar Rapids after a rise in violence that culminated Sunday night in a brutal attack on a police officer.

Police have blanketed the streets in

blocks near the corner of First Avenue East and 16th Street. They've issued jaywalking tickets and upped public intoxication arrests. One woman was arrested for crossing First Avenue against a "Don't Walk" stoplight signal at 16th Street East.

On average, police are reporting 25 percent more arrests per day this week than last. Police said they don't keep track of tickets for jaywalking or curfew violations.

"What we're really here to do is to show the public that this is still their neighbor-

hood," Lt. Chuck Mincks said. "This is not retaliation for Officer Tim Davis," the officer who was severely injured while pursuing armed robbery suspects.

In the area now under such scrutiny, Davis has a reputation as laid-back, friendly and respectful. Young people told The Gazette they liked him.

Jagarius Bell, 17, who lives in the 1400 block of A Avenue NE, close to where Davis was assaulted, said he knows the officer, as well as the three young men

► **POLICE, PAGE 10A**



Adam Belz/The Gazette

Chenes Bell looks out the front window of her home in the 1400 block of A Avenue NE, where Cedar Rapids police have been patrolling constantly this week. An officer was seriously injured in the area Sunday.

**EDUCATION**



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Scott Kirsch of Iowa City walks with his daughters Sidney (left), 7, and Madison, 9, at the end of the school day at Roosevelt Elementary in Iowa City. The school is over capacity and needs major repairs. Superintendent Lane Flügge is recommending it be closed and a new school built off Camp Cardinal Boulevard south of Coral Ridge Mall. The new school would cost \$11.5 million. Upgrading Roosevelt would cost \$5.7 million.



Gazette map

By Gregg Hennigan

The Gazette

**IOWA CITY** — Roosevelt Elementary School in Iowa City opened in 1991, and Esther Otto moved into her home across the street the following decade.

Now, after more than 40 years of being so near the school, she may outlast it. The Iowa City school board is considering closing Roosevelt, 611 Greenwood Dr., and replacing it with a new building a few miles away.

"Of course, it means everything to me," the 91-year-old Otto said of the school. "I was just sick when I saw that (proposal to close it) in the paper."

It's been decades since Otto's three sons went to Roosevelt, but her continued affection for the school is not uncommon. People who live near Roosevelt but who don't have children who attend it say it's more than parents who have a stake in what happens.

A school, they argue, is vital to a neighborhood, providing the area with its identity and a place to play and meet. They believe, as do some experts, that a school also makes the surrounding area a more attractive place to live, which may boost property values.

"The stability of the neighborhood comes

► **ROOSEVELT, PAGE 10A**

## Same-sex marriage ruling expected today from Iowa's top court

By Rod Boshart

Des Moines Bureau

**DES MOINES** — State lawmakers likely will not address same-sex marriage before they adjourn their regular session, regardless of today's Iowa Supreme Court ruling in the case, top leaders said Thursday.

"I think it's exceedingly unlikely that we will pursue legislation this session on that subject," Senate Majority Leader

Mike Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs, told Statehouse reporters. Top Democrats expect to conclude this year's session by the end of next week.

The Iowa Supreme Court issued a notice Thursday that the seven-member panel expects to issue what could be a landmark ruling in a case challenging a state law that defines marriage as only between one man and one woman. Court of-

feels plan to post the justices' opinion at 8:30 a.m. today.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, D-Des Moines, advised against a rush to judgment on the politically volatile social issue, saying it will take lawmakers some time to analyze the ruling and what policy implications it may carry.

"We're going to encourage everybody to take a deep breath and analyze the decision," McCarthy said. "After that, we'll make an intelligent determination on where we go from there."

Defenders of traditional marriage have pushed for a constitutional protection that would define marriage in Iowa as a legally

**Court's decision**

- Check [www.GazetteOnline.com](http://www.GazetteOnline.com) starting this morning for full coverage of the ruling.
- Poll lists most Iowans support same-sex unions. 9A

County district judge ruled the statute unconstitutional in a lawsuit brought by six same-

sex couples who were denied marriage licenses in 2005. One marriage took place before the judge stayed the ruling pending Supreme Court review.

That is a statutory provision now, but the law has been in limbo since a Polk

County district judge ruled the statute unconstitutional in a lawsuit brought by six same-

sex couples who were denied marriage licenses in 2005. One marriage took place before the judge stayed the ruling pending Supreme Court review.

Senate GOP Leader Paul McKinley of Chariton said he believes Iowans support one-man-one-woman marriage.

For further decisions, go to [www.iowasupremecourt.gov](http://www.iowasupremecourt.gov). Contact the writer: (515) 283-1200 or [rod.boshart@gazette.com](mailto:rod.boshart@gazette.com)

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**TODAY'S WEATHER**  
Mostly sunny, more seasonal  
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# Roosevelt/School board

FROM PAGE 1A

from a neighborhood school, and it's a focal point for a neighborhood because more moms on there than just children going to school there," said Ruth Baker, who lives a block from Roosevelt.

Her children are grown, but she wants Roosevelt to stay for the good of the current school kids and the neighborhood.

State education organizations do not track school closings, so numbers on how frequently they occur are not available.

In Cedar Rapids, there's a question if attendance will be high enough this fall to reopen flood-damaged Taylor Elementary. But that situation is unusual because it was created by a natural disaster.

Whether Roosevelt remains open is still unknown.

The school board is to make a decision by mid-May.

Superintendent Lane Plügge has recommended closing the building, saying it is over capacity and in need of major repairs. The school would cost an estimated \$5.1 million to upgrade, versus \$11.6 million to build a new school.

It'd be more cost-effective in the long term to build new, Plügge has said. Also, Roosevelt is unbalanced in terms of its racial and socioeconomic makeup, and he wants its students better distributed.

The new school would be off Camp Cardinal Boulevard, south of Coral Ridge Mall. A shift in boundaries also would affect Weber, Horn and Kirkwood elementary schools.

There seems to be broad agreement that Roosevelt has some serious issues. But at two public forums that attracted more than 100 people each, it was clear many people

believe a school is Roosevelt's last fall, district's percent for fr lunches, income, percent of One-Corridor school's effect on John real estate of Iowa, neighborhood those con to attend every valu near gaur research enjoy the

charged in connection with armed robbery and assault of Davis.

Davis "was never one of those uptight cops," Bell said. "He was a cool dude. I feel bad for him and his family, and I wish the best for them."

But Bell also insists there's no crime problem in his part of Cedar Rapids. He believes Jose Rockiett, 17, the youth police believe assaulted Davis, probably panicked when a plainclothes police officer approached him.

Bell, who lives in the Moundview neighborhood, and others across First Avenue in the Wellington Heights neighborhood, said they are frustrated with what they see as police heavy-handedness and harassment.

Bell and dozens of others watched Wednesday as several squad cars idled on Fifth Avenue SE. Police issued jaywalking tickets to at

least three pedestrians on the narrow street and removed a basketball hoop from the sidewalk in front of 1417 Fifth Ave. SE. Police said the hoop was in the city's right of way and nobody claimed it.

"They're taking this out on innocent people," Bell said.

But feelings about the police crackdown break on generational lines.

Chenee Bell, Jagarius' mother, had less sympathy for the young men who were arrested and chastised her son for even spending time in the 1400 block of Fifth Avenue SE.

"Look where you all were at. Fifth and Fifteenth. Those are the hottest blocks in town," she scolded.

Bell said young people in her neighborhood don't have respect for authority.

"It's getting worse. It's getting worse. They think they can just run over Cedar Rapids," she said. "They're thinking they're grown. They're thinking they know better than us."

Police expect to soon open a district station at the busy corner of First Avenue East and 15th Street SE, kitty-cornered from the Road Ranger, in the heart of pedestrian traffic through that part of town.

That plan and the increased police presence thrills business owners along that section of First Avenue East.

"That's perfect," said Joely Xiao, part-owner of the China Inn. "A lot of people are so excited the police are going to move there."

Scott Crosby, president of the First Avenue Uptown College District, said he figured there would be a crime spike this spring with the warmer

## How you can help

Those wishing to help Officer Tim Davis and his family can:

- Go to [www.GazetteOnline.com](http://www.GazetteOnline.com) for the three Web sites set up to take donations.
- Drop off donations at any Collins Community Credit Union office; make checks payable to the Cedar Rapids

Police Protective Association — FBO Tim Davis.

- Mail donations to Per Mar Security Services, Attn: Todd Parman, 510 First St. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404; make checks payable to the Tim Davis Fund.

weather.

"We knew it was coming. We didn't know the level," he said. "There's a lot of work to be done."

In the past 10 days:

- A woman was mugged at gunpoint around 8 a.m. while in her car in a parking lot at 1420 First Ave. NE.
- A woman stole a car from the 1200 block of Third Avenue SE, got into a car chase and killed a cabdriver in a wreck in southwest Cedar Rapids.
- Two men were injured in a shooting at the Who's on First sports bar, 1323 First Ave. SE.
- A man was held up and beaten by three men with a handgun in the 1600 block of First Avenue East, the Sunday night call that led Davis and his partner to stop three suspects a block away on A Avenue NE.

Davis, who's been with the Police Department four years, was found by his car. He was in surgery for three hours at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, where he remains unconscious and in guarded condition.

Police Chief Greg Graham told The Gazette on Monday he would not tolerate such "unthinkable" behavior and that the community also would not tolerate it. He could not be reached for comment Thursday about the increased police presence in the area.

Sgt. Cristy Hamblin said Thursday she did not know if Davis was struck more than once or whether he was hit with a gun or a fist.

"We're still trying to piece that together," she said. "I don't know."

The three suspects — Rockiett, Robert Watkins III, 14, and Maurice Harden, 15, all of Cedar Rapids — remain at the Linn County Juvenile Center. All three are charged with first-degree robbery. Rockiett also is charged with willful injury.

For further discussion, see Adam Belz's blog at [www.GazetteOnline.com](http://www.GazetteOnline.com) Contact the writer: (319) 398-8273 or [adam.belz@gazcomm.com](mailto:adam.belz@gazcomm.com)

# Police/Officer at University Hospitals after 3-hour surgery

FROM PAGE 1A

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Jagarius Bell Cedar Rapids



Chenee Bell Cedar Rapids



Toni Cilek I.C. school board president

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