



Des Moines, other Iowa cities to host Harlem Globetrotters

IOWA LIFE, 1D

The Des Moines Register

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DRAMATIC TENSION

Law helps lower Opera's salaries

Organization applies Fair Labor Standards carveout

Tyler Jett
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Part of a series on the labor practices of the Des Moines Metro Opera.
For years, Des Moines Metro Opera leaders have explained to their workers that they are “generally exempt from overtime.”

Employee timecards and paychecks show they sometimes work 80, 90 or even more than 100 hours a week. In the workers' contracts reviewed by the Des Moines Register, the opera's leaders describe their employment as “seasonal.” This term is a reference to an obscure federal labor law: Any “seasonal amusement” business does not have to pay overtime or minimum wage. The ex-

emption applies to any business that operates for seven months or fewer in a year. The opera employs most of its workers from May through July and stages shows for about three weeks each summer. The organization has used the exemption to deny overtime since at least 2013, according to employee contracts and an internal company email that the
See OPERA, Page 6A

“Our compensation is in line with industry standards and applicable law. Every year, we work to find ways to make strides and changes in that.”
DMMO leader Michael Egel



NEW SKYSCRAPER KEEPS GROWING

Downtown Des Moines' first skyscraper in more than two decades is on the rise, as seen Tuesday, Sept. 9. Crews poured the seventh-level deck of 515 Walnut on Aug. 26, according to Beal Derkenne Construction, the firm leading the project. At 33 stories, the building will be the largest residential project in the city's central business district, with plans for 390 apartment units. It is expected to be completed in 2027.

ZACH BOYDEN-HOLMES/THE REGISTER

DMPD goes into details about '24

Chief talks to council about annual report

Virginia Barreda
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

There were few gun seizures, more responses to mental health crises and challenges with cryptocurrency among the insights the Des Moines Police Department shared in its 2024 annual report. Police received 451,860 emergency and non-emergency calls in 2024, a drop from 492,827 the year before. Calls to 911 dropped 10% to 149,261, the data show, a return to roughly the same number of calls in 2022. Des Moines Police Chief Michael McTaggart, sworn in last November, presented last year's call statistics, along with data on arrests, traffic citations and gun seizures, at a Des Moines City Council work session on Monday, Sept. 8. Here are six takeaways from the report.

Speeding citations drop amid Iowa law change

Automated traffic enforcement camera speeding citations dropped to 78,178 in 2024, 20% fewer than the year prior. McTaggart said the number could be skewed because a new Iowa law triggered a pause in enforcement from May 17 and June 27. Along with the permanent speed camera on eastbound Interstate 235, the city has three mobile units, and the department posts the camera locations weekly, Des Moines Police Department spokesperson Sgt. Paul Parizek said.

At the work session, McTaggart said the Iowa Department of Transportation recently denied the city's application for permits for six new automated speed camera locations in Des Moines. The state didn't give a basis for why, he said. According to an appeal letter sent from the police department to IDOT about the denied spots, the locations would have been:

- 1400 block of Grand Avenue (westbound)

See POLICE, Page 6A

MI judge tosses 'fake electors' case

Group of Republicans won't face criminal trial

Arpan Lobo and Paul Egan
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

LANSING, MI – After a judge dismissed the state's case against them, a group of Michigan Republicans will not face criminal trial over a series of felony charges stemming from an alleged at-

tempt to steer the 2020 election to President Donald Trump. Ingham County District Judge Kristen Simmons' Sept. 9 ruling is a blow to Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, who charged 16 with a series of election- and forgery-related counts in 2023. Nessel's office oversaw the prosecution, which ends after Simmons determined there was not enough probable cause to send the case to trial after a lengthy preliminary examination process.

Simmons, reciting her ruling during the hearing, criticized prosecutors for insufficiently establishing a case against the so-called fake electors and said it was more likely any intent to defraud was on behalf of the Trump campaign. “This is a fraud case, and we have to prove intent. And I don't believe there is evidence sufficient to prove intent,” Simmons said.
See TOSSED, Page 7A

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