

Murder trial

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The Gazette



Tuesday, February 24, 2026

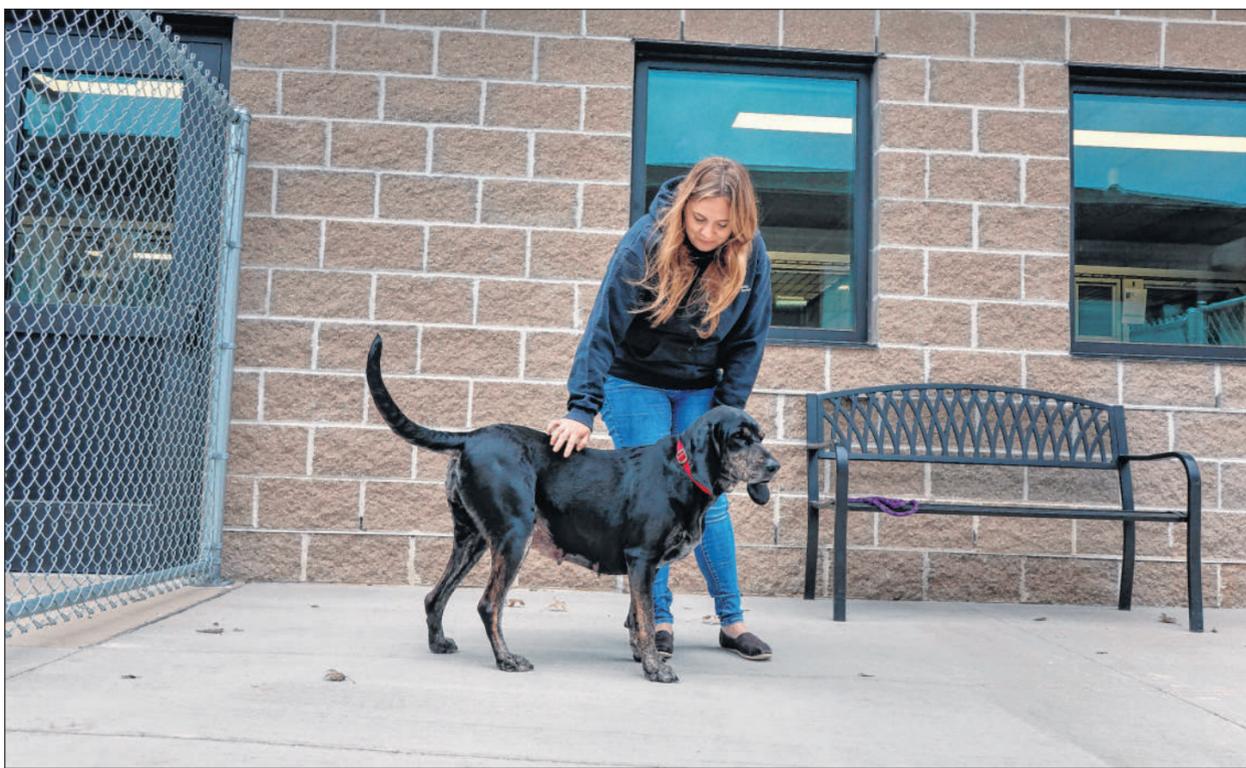
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Cedar Valley Humane Society expands shelter



Hannah McFarlane, program director at the Cedar Valley Humane Society, pets Mabel in one of the new outdoor dog play yards last Tuesday at the shelter in rural Linn County. The addition to the shelter on Mount Vernon Road almost triples the space to house dogs and cats awaiting adoption. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

It's part of a three-phase, \$10M expansion and renovation

By Grace Nieland, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — When walking into the Cedar Valley Humane Society's new canine area, it's easy to think you're seeing double — or even quadruple.

First, you'll see Jack, a 4-month-old terrier mix with one spotted ear pressing his paws on the kennel door. Then there's Winnie — the only girl in the motley crew of large paws and puppy dog eyes.

Clint and Bobby round out the canine quartet with matching white chest markings and wagging tails. All four are different colors, but it's immediately clear that they're a matching set.

"These guys just came back today," shelter program director Hannah McFarlane said, gesturing at the kennels. "They came in as a litter, so we got them all spayed and neutered, and they just got back."

The pups are some of the first to enjoy the Cedar Valley Humane Society's



The new addition to the Cedar Valley Humane Society opened in January. It almost triples the space available for dogs and cats at the adoption shelter, 7411 Mount Vernon Road SE in rural Linn County. (Submitted)

new and expanded shelter space that opened earlier this month in rural Linn County. The expansion marks Phase 2 of the society's \$10 million-plus renovation.

The move expands the nonprofit's ability to shelter dogs and cats that come from Linn and Benton counties.

► SHELTER, PAGE 8A

Iowa City schools plan \$8M in cuts

I.C. district's proposal includes reducing teachers

By Grace King, The Gazette

IOWA CITY — Potential spending cuts of \$8 million for the 2026-27 school year — including reducing up to about 23 educators — as well as guidance for how the district will lower spending for the remainder of this academic year is being presented today to the Iowa City school board.

The proposal for the upcoming academic year includes adjusting the district's class size model at its elementary schools to reduce up to 10 classroom teachers through retirements and resignations, a savings of \$900,000, according to school board documents.

Another five to six teaching staff could be reduced from the district's middle schools and six to seven teaching staff could be reduced from the district's high schools, a combined cost savings of \$1.1 million. The reductions would occur through attrition.

Another \$1 million could be saved through performance-based non-renewals of probationary teachers as recommended by building administrators. The board document does not specify how many positions could be affected.

The Iowa City Community School District uses a model called the Weighted Resource Allocation Model to control elementary class sizes based on rates of students who face barriers in their education. For example, if 70 percent or more students in a classroom receive free or reduced-price lunch, that class size will be smaller than a classroom that has fewer than the 70 percent.

The Iowa City school board will hear the potential budget reduction ideas at its meeting starting at 6 p.m. today at 2255 N. Dubuque Rd. in Iowa City. The meeting is open to the public, and there will be a public comment period.

The cost-saving measures

► BUDGET, PAGE 8A

Trump's big speech will be delivered to a changed nation

State of the Union set for tonight

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump will stand before Congress tonight to deliver the annual State of the Union address to a suddenly transformed nation.

One year back in office, Trump has emerged as a president defying conventional expectations. He has executed a head-spinning agenda, upending priorities at home, shattering alliances abroad and challenging the nation's foundational system of checks and balances. Two Americans were killed by federal agents while

HOW TO WATCH

- **What:** President Donald Trump's State of the Union address
- **When:** 8 p.m. Tuesday (Iowa time)
- **Where:** Watch on all major broadcast networks, cable news channels and streaming online at WhiteHouse.gov and YouTube.

protesting the Trump administration's immigration raids and mass deportations.

As the lawmakers sit in the House chamber listening to Trump's agenda for the year ahead, the moment is an existential one for Congress, which

has essentially become sidelined by his expansive reach, the Republican president bypassing his slim GOP majority to amass enormous power for himself.

"It's crazy," said Nancy Henderson Korpi, a retiree in northern Minnesota who joined an Indivisible protest group and plans to watch the speech from home. "But what is disturbing more to me is that Congress has essentially just handed over their power."

She said, "We could make some sound decisions and changes if Con-

gress would do their job."

STATE OF UPHEAVAL

The country is at a crossroads, celebrating its 250th anniversary while experiencing some of the most significant changes to its politics, policies and general mood in many Americans' lifetimes.

The president muscled his agenda through Congress when he needed to — often pressuring lawmakers with a phone call during cliffhanger votes — but more often avoided the messy give-and-take of the legislative process to power past his own party and the

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