

Ready for a real estate search with real results?

Search beyond the usual suspects and find the homes that truly fit.

The next move is yours.

Discover more at addressUSA.com

addressUSA



Evansville COURIER & PRESS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2025 | COURIERPRESS.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Court sides with pride festival's organizers



Tim Brown-Salsman, center, holds a bubble machine as attendees, organizers and performers gather for a group picture during the first Loogootee Pride Festival on June 10, 2023. RICH JANZARUK/HERALD-TIMES

Says Loogootee violated First Amendment rights

Cate Charron
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

A pride festival will take place this weekend in the public square of a rural Indiana city after a federal district court found the city's previous event policies had violated organizers' First Amendment rights.

Judge Richard L. Young, who presides over the District Court of Southern Indiana, found that Loogootee, Indiana, violated the event organizers' constitutional rights after the city passed several restrictive changes to its special events policy.

Public institutions can legally establish time, place and manner restrictions

on free expression as long as these restrictions are narrowly tailored. Young, who was appointed by former President Bill Clinton, found the ordinance was too broad.

Loogootee, a southern Indiana city of 2,600 people, has fostered a complicated relationship with its local LGBTQ+ community following years of advocates seeking to publicly celebrate their identity despite strong, sometimes threatening, community pushback.

The city's most recent move sought to change the location of this year's PrideFest from the highly visible public square downtown. Under a new policy, events could only be held in one of two parks. Still, lawyers from the Indiana chapter of the American Civil Liberties

Union, which represented festival organizer Patoka Valley AIDS Community Action Group, argued the city did not uniformly apply the policy.

The Aug. 28 permanent injunction undid the city's location restriction. The city must allow PrideFest to take place from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sept. 6 in the public square and with its requested streets closed. "It is so important for our local LGBTQ+ community to be celebrated and seen," said Tracy Brown-Salsman, vice president of Patoka Valley and PrideFest organizer, in a news release. "Having our 3rd Annual Loogootee PrideFest downtown on the public square is so important because

See LOOGOOTE, Page 3A

'I want to be sounding the alarm'

Robinson to file appeal against 'intellectual diversity' sanction

Brian Rosenzweig
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

One of the first professors to be formally sanctioned under Indiana's intellectual diversity law is filing a grievance against his university, claiming they failed to do "due diligence" in investigating claims made against him.

Ben Robinson, a Germanic Studies professor at Indiana University Bloomington, was sanctioned by his dean in August for allegedly inserting his "personal experiences and opinions" that were critical of the university and Israel into his classes. Last October, an anonymous complaint alleged Robinson used class time to criticize IU's free speech policies and talked about Israel's offensive campaign in Gaza in "untrue and unfair ways."

Robinson's case is perhaps the first known – or at least publicized – instance of a professor in Indiana being sanctioned under SEA 202, an "intellectual diversity" law enacted last year that requires public university professors to expose students to a diverse

See ROBINSON, Page 3A



Professor Ben Robinson stands with friends at the Sample Gates during the candlelight vigil in support of free speech on Aug. 25, 2024. RICH JANZARUK/THE HERALD-TIMES

Man accused of robbing Plato's Closet, Chuck E. Cheese

Jon Webb
Evansville Courier & Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

An Evansville man has been arrested and preliminarily charged with two counts of robbery after allegedly stealing money and firing a gun inside both Chuck E. Cheese and a used clothing store Tuesday.

Raquavion Lamont Cooper, 23, faces two counts of robbery as a Level 3 felony; two counts of criminal recklessness as a Level 5 felony; and three counts of pointing a pointing a loaded firearm, a Level 6 felony, the affidavit against him states. Authorities also tacked on a misdemeanor count of resisting law enforcement.

No employees were injured during the robberies.

The charges stem from a short spree Evansville police say Cooper carried out in a shopping complex on North Green River Road just after 7 p.m.

According to the affidavit, police had just responded to a report of a robbery at Plato's Closet when another call came in about a similar incident that had unfolded at Chuck E. Cheese just across the parking lot. Police say Cooper robbed both with a loaded gun and discharged one round at each location.

Robbery at Plato's Closet

A manager at Plato's Closet told police she first spotted a male "looking into

the front window of the business," the affidavit states. He then walked in wearing a gray hoodie, black pants and a face mask. He carried a firearm stuffed inside a grocery sack.

"(The manager) stated that the offender walked a few steps into the building and fired the firearm into the air," the affidavit states. "(The manager) stated that the offender began to smile and approached her. (They) stated that the offender began to tell her that she needed to give him all the money in the store."

The manager ushered other employees into a backroom and shut the door. The offender then directed the manager to the registers, where he collected a little more than \$2,000 in cash. He then fled the store.

The manager told police she followed him and watched him toss the gun in a trash container and sprint toward the Normandy Apartment Homes just behind the complex.

Police later recovered a Glock 21 handgun in the trash, wrapped inside a grocery sack.

Robbery at Chuck E. Cheese

An EPD detective then spoke to employees at the nearby Chuck E. Cheese. The store manager described a similar scene to the one that took place at Plato's: a man in a gray sweatshirt and face mask pulled a gun and demanded mon-

See ROBBERIES, Page 2A

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to courierpress.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 181 | No. 205
Subscribe 800-288-3100
©2025 \$3.49

