

Stabbing suspect killed in shooting at De Soto plant

By **JOSIE HEIMSOTH**
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One person is dead in an officer-involved shooting and another is critically injured after a stabbing at the Panasonic plant in De Soto on Friday.

Johnson County Sheriff Byron Roberson said Johnson County deputies

responded at 10:59 a.m. Friday to a call for a stabbing at the plant and found one victim with multiple stab wounds. The deputies found the suspect, and the interaction ended with an officer-involved shooting.

"The suspect was shot and deputies performed life saving efforts," Roberson said at a media

briefing Friday afternoon. "He was pronounced deceased ... at 11:25 (a.m.)."

One victim was transported to a hospital with multiple stab wounds and is in critical condition. No deputies or officers were injured at the scene.

"This is an active investigation," Roberson said.

No names of the victim,

the suspect or officers involved were released at the briefing. Roberson said the department does not have information on if the suspect was an employee or contracted to Panasonic.

No information was given about what caused the incident or why the initial stabbing occurred.



JOSIE HEIMSOTH/Journal-World Photo
Johnson County Sheriff Byron Roberson speaks during a media briefing after a stabbing and shooting at the Panasonic plant in De Soto on Friday.

'JUSTICE AS WE KNOW IT'

Man who killed Lawrence resident, stabbed dog gets nearly 13 years



KIM CALLAHAN/Journal-World Photo
Judge Sally Pokorny sentenced Robert Earl Davis to nearly 13 years in prison Friday. His attorney, Branden Smith, is at center.

By **KIM CALLAHAN**
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In a courtroom hallway Friday, the brother of a slain man tightly embraced the sister of the man's killer — in acknowledgement of the loss both families have suffered.

The emotional gesture — rare in criminal cases — followed the sentencing hearing of 58-year-old Robert Earl Davis, who was ordered to serve nearly 13 years in prison for fatally stabbing Daniel Evan Brooks, 66, of Lawrence, on Aug. 18, 2021, outside a Dillons grocery store. Davis was originally charged with first-degree murder but last month pleaded no contest to voluntary manslaughter and cruelty to animals. He had also stabbed Brooks' beloved dog, Bear, who narrowly survived the attack.

Inside the courtroom, the brother of Brooks and the



Contributed Photos
LEFT: Daniel Evans Brooks, who was killed in a 2021 attack, is seen. ABOVE: Bear, Brooks' dog who was also stabbed in the attack is seen recovering at the Lawrence Humane Society.

sister of Davis had sought different outcomes; the brother, Don Brooks, wanted Davis to serve the nearly 13-year sentence on top of, not counting, the 1,577 days Davis has served since the killing. The sister, Barbara Davis, wanted her brother, who suffers from severe mental illness, to be sentenced only to the time served and to be allowed to return with her to Texas for

treatment.

"I don't hate him," Don Brooks told the court, which prompted deep sobs from Davis at the defense table. But the fact remained that his brother, a U.S. Navy veteran, "bled out in that parking lot" in broad daylight after a staggering act of lethal violence.

His brother was a quiet man who had his own difficulties in life, Brooks

said, but he was kind and caring, was an animal lover and was adored by his nieces and nephews. Brooks lamented that just seven months prior to the stabbing he had encouraged his brother to move to Lawrence from Wichita. Lawrence, he told him, is "a safe place." He could have a better life here with Bear.

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City leaders to reconsider entrance fees at rec centers

2 newcomers campaigned against the fees, but 3 incumbents backed city budget including them

By **CHAD LAWHORN**
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After Lawrence City Commission candidates got an earful on the campaign trail about pending fees to enter the city's recreation centers, the commission is going to reconsider the fee issue at its Tuesday meeting.

Voters in November elected two newcomers to the commission — Mike Courtney and Kristine Polian — who both expressed opposition to the city's plans to begin charging entrance fees to the city's recreation centers, with the fees set to begin next month.

Tuesday's meeting — just the third for the new commissioners — is the last City Commission meeting before those fees are set to begin on Jan. 5. Despite the fees already being approved in September as part of the city's 2026 budget process, the item is back on the city's agenda to confirm that the new City Commission is still on board with the fees.

The math on that is not entirely clear. Courtney and Polian both campaigned heavily against the fees during their campaigns, however, they are only two of five commissioners. It would take three commissioners in opposition of the fees to scrap the program. The three incumbent commissioners all voted for the city budget that included the fee system for recreation centers.

But that's not to say the fees have been popular with the three incumbent commissioners. Rather, they decided the fees were better than making deep cuts to the city's parks and recreation department and preferable to raising the city's property tax rate to cover the department's expenses.

The city's property tax rate already has been set for the 2026 budget, but the prospect of cutting the budget of the parks and recreation department is still a possibility, if commissioners decide to scrap the fee proposal.

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