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Tuesday, September 2, 2025

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FEGLYS ANTONIO CAMPOS-ARRIBA

‘HE WAS LIKE A KID’



ANDREW SMITH, THE NONPAREIL

Brenda Hernandez and her son piece together a memorial at a celebration of life service for Feglys Antonio Campos-Arriba on Saturday, Aug. 30, 2025, in Washington Park in Denison. Campos-Arriba was shot and killed during an altercation with police. An officer also sustained “serious injuries,” but recovered, according to the Denison Police Department.

Memorial remembers Denison man killed by police

ANDREW SMITH
Council Bluffs Nonpareil

The life of Feglys Antonio Campos-Arriba — a 36-year-old Cuban migrant and Denison resident for about one year — was celebrated Saturday in Denison’s Washington Park after he was killed Aug. 15 in an officer-involved shooting.

The Denison Police Department said in a news release that Campos-Arriba was uncooperative after the officer on duty responded to a call for service in Washington Park around 11:30 p.m. on Aug. 15.

Police say a physical altercation left the officer with serious injuries, and Cam-

pos-Arriba dead. The officer — currently on paid administrative leave — was treated for injuries and later released.

Campos-Arriba’s obituary with Pauley Jones Funeral Home says he is survived by his parents Magalys Arriba Fuentes and Felipe Campos De la cruz, two children and his siblings Alejandro Campos Robone, Celia Campos Ramos and Melissa Anhara Campos Arriba.

Though Campos-Arriba’s family, who are residents of Cuba and Spain, could not make the celebration, former coworkers, friends and community members gathered in Washington Park for a message

from area ministers and ceremonial yet upbeat music.

Organizer Brenda Hernandez said Campos-Arriba emigrated to the United States from Cuba around two years ago. She said he lived in Nebraska for a short time before moving to Denison, where he started working at the Smithfield Foods plant about a year ago, which is where Hernandez and many others at the celebration of life first met Campos-Arriba.

“He was a really nice person. He was always smiling,” Hernandez said. “He would

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Land by future school may be zoned industrial

ANDREW SMITH
Council Bluffs Nonpareil

Pottawattamie County is moving forward with plans to rezone 40 acres of agricultural land just east of an industrial park that will sit across the road from a planned Lewis Central primary school.

The Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors approved a second reading of an ordinance to rezone the parcel adjacent to

the I-80/I-29 Industrial Park in Council Bluffs to allow limited industrial uses.

Armstrong Investments, the parcel’s owner and the existing industrial park’s developer, made the rezoning application, said Matt Wyant, planning and development director for Pottawattamie County.

“It’s very successful,” Wyant said of the industrial park during Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors meeting.

Wyant said he’s unsure of the final plans for the parcel, but rezoning is “just one step of the process” to allow for further development.

The park, located just south of the interstate interchange and along 192nd Street, is home to multiple equipment rental companies, a First Student school bus depot and other businesses. It has filled out since a final plat was approved in August 2020 and

developers later celebrated construction in 2021.

Supervisor Susan Miller was the only board member to raise a concern about the project at Tuesday’s meeting, after previously questioning water table issues during last week’s first reading.

“I still wonder what the traffic solution is

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Weather
Partly sunny and warmer
High 76 • Low 61
FORECAST • A8



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DIGEST

Northgate Revival worship concert on Sept. 11

Northgate Revival, a worship group that travels the United States, will perform a worship concert in Council Bluffs on Thursday, Sept. 11.

The performance at 7 p.m. will be held at Bethany Presbyterian Church at 1900 S. Seventh St., according to organizers. Admission is free, but a freewill offering will be collected.

“We’d love to make this a unified worship experience for the whole city,” tour coordinator Bobbie Frye told The Nonpareil in an email.

Find more information on the group at northgaterevival.com.

Bishops release ‘Pilgrims of Hope’ on immigration

The four Catholic bishops of Iowa — Archbishop Thomas Zinkula of Dubuque, Bishop William Joensen of Des Moines, Bishop Dennis Walsh of Davenport and Bishop John Keehner of Sioux City — have released a pastoral reflection on the church’s teaching on immigration and the dignity of the human person.

“The purpose is to help Catholics and all people of good will inform their consciences and better understand the teaching of the Catholic Church as it relates to the issue of migration,” according to a news release from the Iowa Catholic Conference.

“Pilgrims of Hope: A Pastoral Reflection on Immigration” asks people to uphold the dignity of the human person “by welcoming the stranger, defending the oppressed, and standing in solidarity with those who are displaced.”

The letter asserts that “the security of a nation can never be used as an excuse to violate the dignity and human rights of migrants, including the right to due process by law.”

The bishops also pledge that Catholic institutions will be places of welcome and accompaniment for migrants and refugees by providing legal aid, pastoral support and material assistance where possible.

The document is available at iowacatholicconference.org.

Artists’ Cooperative Gallery celebrates 50 years

Featuring its current and former members, the Artists’ Cooperative Gallery in Omaha’s historic Old Market will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the gallery during September.

The month-long exhibit with over 100 distinguished regional artists begins Wednesday, according to a news release. Several Council Bluffs and Southwest Iowa artists are members of the co-op.

An opening reception is set for

Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. inviting visitors to see reminders of ACG’s history and contributions to the Omaha area art scene. Most art will be available for sale at the free gallery, which is located at 405 S. 11th St. The cooperative gallery is open daily except Monday.

ACG has been showing works of respected artists since 1975. Visit artistscoopomaha.com to learn more about the organization.

FBI website looks for potential Gardner victims

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is seeking to identify any potential victims of former gymnastics coach Sean Michael Gardner.

Anyone who was victimized, or whose minor dependents were victims or who knows of someone, can contact the FBI at tinyurl.com/fbigardner.

Gardner, now 38, is alleged to have placed a hidden camera in a bathroom at a gymnastics studio in Purvis, Mississippi, where he was then working as a gymnastics coach between December 2017 and April 2018, according to a criminal complaint.

“Gardner created multiple videos depicting numerous minors in stages of undress in that bathroom including close-up views of their anuses and genitals,” the FBI said in a news release. “Gardner moved from Mississippi to Iowa in 2018 to coach at a gym in West Des Moines, Iowa. West Des Moines Police searched Gardner’s apartment in late May 2025. Forensic examination of electronic devices seized from Gardner’s West Des Moines apartment uncovered the hidden camera recordings taken in the Mississippi gym bathroom.”

Congressional App Challenge open to students

Middle and high school students across Iowa’s 4th Congressional District are invited to participate in the 2025 Congressional App Challenge.

The nationwide competition encourages students to learn to code and expose them to the possibilities of a career in science, technology, engineering, and math, accordingn to a news release from U.S. Rep. Randy Feenstra.

“This competition gives middle and high school students the opportunity to have fun while coding and building their own app,” Feenstra said in the release.

The contest invites students to work in groups up to four to build a software application for the internet, PC, tablet, mobile, Raspberry Pi or another platform of their choice. Any programming language is acceptable.

Find more at congressionalappchallenge.us. Students can direct questions to abby.vanderwerf@mail.house.gov or 712-422-2696.

Zoning

From A1

going to be down there,” Miller said.

Wyant acknowledged the concern, noting traffic could be “interesting” once the Lewis Central Community School District builds an elementary school across the road.

Two parcels to the west were purchased by Lewis Central in December 2024, according to the county assessor’s website, after a successful \$30 million bond measure cleared the way for the dis-

trict to purchase more land for the future school. They had previously purchased a neighboring parcel in February 2024.

Miller said traffic is already “interesting” but all supervisors — besides Tim Wichman, who was absent — voted to advance the rezoning decision forward to its final reading, which is expected to be next week.

The Pottawattamie County Planning Commission recommended approval after a July 29 public hearing. Council Bluffs officials will later decide whether the property can be subdivided if county-level rezoning is approved.

Denison

From A1

always be laughing, dancing. He would never threaten nobody.”

“He is like a kid, but he don’t make anything bad — he’s very specific,” added former Smithfield coworker Myrna Zamago.

Another former coworker told The Nonpareil the shooting was heartbreaking and she believed Campos-Arriba would not harm anybody — but he had been somewhat “sick.” The coworker, who spoke through a translator and wished to remain anonymous, also said Campos-Arriba was very kid-like.

“If he had more support or more help around, he could have not fallen down this much,” the woman said.

Hernandez believes Campos-Arriba was laid off from Smithfield three months ago as part the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s “termination of parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans.”

The DHS under the Biden administration allowed citizens or nationals of those countries to travel to the United States and remain during a parole period if they were otherwise inadmissible.

The Trump administration terminated those parole programs March 25, with any parole agreements that had not already expired by April 24 terminated on that date. Employment authorization was cancelled, and migrants were required to leave the United States.

Hernandez said that Campos-Arriba lived at the Ho Hum Apartments in Denison, and he may have earned some pay by cleaning them after being let go by Smithfield. Where he used to sit and greet passersby now rests a temporary memorial adorned with posters, flowers, drinks and balloons — although its been damaged by the elements since Campos-Arriba’s death.

“He would always sit there and say hi to you,” Hernadez said about a chair north of Highway 30. “It doesn’t matter what time you would go past; he was sitting there.”

At work he’d be very respectful and greet “everybody” saying “good morning pretty/sweet woman,” according to Zamago.

Hernandez and Zamago believe Campos-Arriba was only staying in Washington Park for two to three days before being fatally shot by polixe. Hernandez’s impression was that Campos-Arriba was no longer able to afford rent.

“We tried to help as much as we could, but everything happened so fast,” Hernandez said.

She said people brought him food and blankets.

Hernandez said people told her they noticed Campos-Arriba sleeping in Washington Park around 10:40 to 10:50 p.m. the night of the shooting, which police say was around 11:30 p.m.

Campos-Arriba’s former coworker, speaking through a translator, said it was sad how aggressive police were and that the aggression is abnormal in the community and Washington Park. She’s seeking “justice” next.

After the incident, Hernandez raised money with a GoFundMe page and helped organize some memorials, including Saturday’s celebration of life. Fund-raised money will soon pay for Campos-Arriba’s cremation, she said. Honorary T-shirts and a customized urn were visible at the event.

Hernandez said she has spo-



ANDREW SMITH PHOTOS, THE NONPAREIL

A crowd gathers at Washington Park in Denison on Saturday, Aug. 30, 2025, for a celebration of life event for Feglys Antonio Campos-Arriba, who was shot and killed during an altercation with police. An officer also sustained “serious injuries,” but recovered, according to the Denison Police Department.



Pastors Rick Torres and Mario Flores lead people in prayer during a message delivered during a celebration of life event for Feglys Antonio Campos-Arriba on Saturday, Aug. 30, 2025, in Washington Park in Denison.

ken with Campos-Arriba’s mom, dad and sisters, and that his mother wants her to take his ashes to Spain, where she lives. Hernandez said his mom wanted to meet his friends.

“She’s like, ‘It’s if I was hugging him again ... and I really appreciate if you guys come back with him,’” Hernandez said of Campos-Arriba’s mom’s request. “It’s something that his mom wanted. It’s something we’re going to try to make happen.”

Hernandez said Campos-Arriba never mentioned any mental health struggles, but he would sometimes be overheard speaking audibly to nobody.

“I think that they could have done more and not just killed him, because that was one of the things that was easier for them. But they didn’t,” Hernandez said.

Hernandez asked why there isn’t a specialized officer in Denison who could have dealt with Campos-Arriba in a non-lethal manner.

A protest on Aug. 17 started in Washington Park and some marched through town to the police station, according to Radio Iowa and seen in a video posted to Facebook. Several people The Nonpareil spoke with believe they’re not getting “the whole story,” and a lack of information has fueled speculation.

“Considering the police said so many things, that the police officer was getting attacked, and they don’t show any body cam footage or anything,” an attendee — who wished to remain anonymous — said people just don’t believe it.

“Maybe they didn’t really figure out that all the community was going to be against them,” Hernandez said about the police. “A lot of people are scared about the police officers, honestly.”

The officer who killed Campos-Arriba will remain on paid administrative leave during the investigation, according to the most recent Aug. 18 statement

from Denison police.

The Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation is reviewing the shooting and will provide its findings to the Iowa Attorney General’s Office and the Crawford County Attorney’s Office. Requests for further comments were not immediately returned over the holiday weekend, but statements said no such comments would be made.

Two pastors addressed the “hurt” in both English and Spanish during the ceremony.

“We felt it so necessary to step up and help our community, through counseling, through our churches, through work with leadership in our city, with the school kids, youth and knowing that there’s definitely a tragedy that took place here at this park,” pastor Rick Torres of New Life Church said after the event. “We needed to come and pray over this park, bring healing to this park, and not just the family, but also the officers that were involved.”

Torres and Pastor Mario Flores shared Bible verses and messages of hope and healing during the event in the park. Both men are members of the Crawford County Latino Ministerial Association, which includes about 10 pastors in the area.

“I think we have amazing food pantries,” Torres said of the ways homeless people can be supported around Denison. “I think what we have to look at now, as community leaders, is shelter for those that are homeless.”

Torres said it’s unfortunate Campos-Arriba was not contacted by or otherwise on the church’s radar. Both pastors said they want to be more mindful of community members in situations like Campos-Arriba’s, with churches and other organizations being able to provide more outreach.

“We’re all hurting in this community,” Torres said. “We won’t have an episode like this ever, ever again in Denison, Iowa.”

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