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The Des Moines Register



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Resort's ex-owners blame boy's drowning on bad parts

Daniel Lathrop
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

The former owners of Altoona's Adventureland Resort have said the death of an 11-year-old boy there in 2021 was the fault of a ride — but not the park, according to court papers made public this week.

The 12-page filing seeks permission from a Polk County district court judge to name Crygenic Plastics Inc. — the company that sold the park inflation bladders for its Raging River ride — as an additional defendant in a lawsuit accusing the park of allowing Michael Jaramillo's drowning.

Guy Cook, attorney for the park's former owners and managers, claims the plastics company failed to maintain flotation bladders that kept the rafts afloat in the simulated white water rapids and failed to warn Adventureland officials of the risks.

The filing is a significant development, according to Ryan Best, the attorney representing Jaramillo's family in its wrongful death claim.

"Over the last year Adventureland has repeatedly stated the Raging River Ride was 'safe,'" Best said. "In this most recent filing, Adventureland admits that the ride was not safe on the day of the deadly incident that took the life of Michael Jaramillo."

In addition to killing Jaramillo, the incident critically injured one of his brothers and, according to court records, left his father with crippling

See **DROWNING**, Page 2A



The closed Raging River entrance during Adventureland's opening day of the 2022 season on May 14 in Altoona.
MEG MCLAUGHLIN/THE REGISTER

More people are homeless, and for longer periods

Polk's unhoused population increases 23% in last year



A homeless camp along the Des Moines River in Des Moines. BRYON HOULGRAVE/THE REGISTER

Virginia Barreda
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Yes, more people are struggling with homelessness in Polk County — they are also staying homeless longer.

That's just one of the findings from five years of data that reveals new insights into the county's homeless community.

According to a count conducted by Homeward, the county's homelessness planning organization, the unhoused population increased 23% in the last year. The survey is conducted on a single night in January and July each year.

Moreover, the number of people who are unsheltered in Polk County has nearly doubled since January, according to preliminary data from a PIT

count in July — from 94 people in January to 184 in July.

That's the highest number ever recorded in Polk County, said Gary Wickering, who oversees Homeless Management Information System for the Institute for Community Alliances, which partners with Homeward to manage data on community

See **HOMELESSNESS**, Page 4A

Iowa to receive \$43 million in opioid settlement

Michaela Ramm
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Iowa and local governments are set to receive \$42.6 million from a settlement with an opioid manufacturer and a pharmaceutical company that was finalized this week.

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller

announced a final settlement has been reached in the lawsuit against Allergan, which is now part of AbbVie, and Teva Pharmaceuticals for its role in the ongoing opioid epidemic. A dozen states, including Iowa, argued the companies failed to take sufficient action in preventing opioid drugs from being diverted to illegal trade.

In total, the settlements will provide

around \$6.6 billion nationwide.

"These settlements will not only provide \$6.6 billion nationally to address the opioids crisis, but they will also require changes to reduce the risk of addicting patients," Miller said in a statement. "We held Teva and Allergan accountable for deceptively marketing

See **SETTLEMENT**, Page 2A

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