



Woodbury County Sheriff's Office

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Matthew Ung
Board Chairman

The Iowa Code requires the Sheriff to perform particular duties. Some of these duties are part of day to day business while others involve the protection and safety of the citizens of this county. There are few, if any, of my responsibilities that are more important than ensuring the safety and security of the public and being certain that orders of the court are followed.

Specifically, it is my responsibility to provide security in the courthouse. We have successfully maintained security in the Woodbury County Courthouse since August of 2013. The courts hear difficult and sometimes volatile cases where a law enforcement presence is necessary. Judges, attorneys, court and county office staff, jurors and the general public need to be confident and feel secure while they are in the Courthouse. We serve as not only security, in general, but as a deterrent to individuals who may otherwise believe there is nothing to stop them from carrying out a grudge or reacting violently to a decision someone in the Courthouse has made.

On June 19, 2017, the Iowa Supreme Court addressed the issue of weapons in courthouses and judicial centers across the State of Iowa. This Supervisory Order states, in part, ". . . the court now concludes Iowa's unified court system requires a consistent, uniform, and statewide policy prohibiting all weapons from courtrooms, court-controlled spaces, and public areas of the courthouses and other justice centers." Finally, the court has ordered the following:

"Accordingly, under our constitutional authority and responsibility to supervise and administer Iowa's district courts, *the supreme court now orders that all weapons are prohibited from courtrooms, court-controlled spaces, and public areas of courthouses and other justice centers occupied by the court system.* . . ." (Emphasis added)

Sheriffs don't take sides on court orders, they carry out whatever the court renders. Therefore, I will continue providing security at the entry point to the courthouse including preventing firearms from entering the building.

Lastly, I'm extremely disappointed that the Board of Supervisors has chosen to politicize this to protect their own political capital. At times, our positions require us to make difficult decisions, however, this decision is simple. The Iowa Supreme Court has rendered an opinion and order. It is the Court's directive and the Court is confident that the Sheriff will carry out this order.

Sheriff Dave Drew