

# The Melcher-Dallas Miner

## Do you have an itch to build a new home?

The City of Melcher-Dallas has reopened the bidding process for three city-owned properties. Bids were taken but rejected last fall, as the M-D City Council's greatest desire is to see new homes built on these properties.

"It's best for the city if these lots do not sit empty," says Mayor Barb VanWyk. "It's in the city's best interest to have homes built. This will create tax revenue for the city and improve neighborhoods by adding new, beautiful homes," she added. The Mayor would also like to remind those considering building a new home that they can apply for a five-year tax abatement, making the prospect of a new home even more attractive and affordable.

Residents and developers bidding on the city-owned properties will be required to sign a development agreement obligating them to demolish existing structures on the property within six months and begin construction on a new home within one year. The home must be at least 1,200 square feet and must be completed and inspected within two years of closing.

A legal description of the three properties offered for bids, as well as the development agreement to accompany bids, can be found on the city's website ([melcherdallasiowa.com](http://melcherdallasiowa.com)). Questions may also be directed to City Hall at 641-947-6501.

## You are cordially invited.....to attend City Council meetings.

Citizens of Melcher-Dallas are not only invited but encouraged to attend all City Council meetings. The agenda for meetings is posted in the M-D Post Office, Iowa State Bank lobby, and at City Hall. The agenda is also posted on the city's website ([melcherdallasiowa.com](http://melcherdallasiowa.com)). Regular meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. at City Hall. All citizens are allowed five minutes to speak.

Occasionally the meeting includes an advertised public hearing on an important topic, such as the city budget or the sale of city-owned property. The Council recently held a public hearing for citizens to provide input on the proposed vacation of Lover's Lane. The city subsequently gave up rights to the east side of the road (affectionally known by locals as "Beer Can Alley"). When the west side of the road has been vacated by Marion County, this road will be gated and posted as private property.

Your opinion counts, and your respectful and timely feedback helps the Council members understand your wishes and preferences about city-related issues and services.



### Important Dates

- Water bills due by March 15th to avoid penalties
- Public Hearing re Fiscal Year 2020 Budget, March 12 at 6:05 p.m. at City Hall
- Bids for city-owned properties due by 4 p.m. April 4th

### Mayor

Barbara VanWyk

### City Council

Brad Robbins

David Ernst

Chris Heaton

Mark Herold

Terry Fisher

(Mayor Pro-Tem)



## NEWBIE NEWS

### Meet Jessie Dodd

If you wondered who moved in to the Wadle house on NW A Street, please meet the new resident, Jessie Dodd. She comes to M-D from Oklahoma, where she lived for 12 years on the edge of a small town. Jessie has had a diverse and very interesting career. She owned her own cleaning business, drove a semi, and worked as a table game and poker dealer at the Choctaw Casino and Resort in Durant, Oklahoma. She has a grown son and three granddaughters. Two of her sisters and their families live in the area.



When asked what she likes about living in Melcher-Dallas, Jessie spoke of neighbors who have helped out with scooping snow and how welcome everyone in her neighborhood and local businesses have made her feel.

If you get a chance, please say hello to this outgoing, friendly lady who now calls Melcher-Dallas home.

## Snow, snow go away!

It's been quite a winter, hasn't it? With one snow after another, it has been very difficult for the city crew to find places to put the snow.

The first priority is always to get the streets cleared—main streets first and side streets second. The next phase of snow removal is to clean out alleys. The final phase is moving the large mounds of snow that might obstruct views.

Sometimes people have just shoveled out and the city truck comes by and dumps a windrow of snow at the end of the driveway. While the city crew makes every effort to minimize the size of the

pile, they simply cannot ensure complete removal in every driveway.

It is the responsibility of each homeowner to clear the snow from around their own mailbox. The fire department is very grateful if a kind neighbor would clear the snow from the fire hydrant in the neighborhood.

Some simple tips to help ensure snow removal goes quickly and efficiently include ensuring your car is not blocking the alley and calling city hall if there is an issue with removal in your neighborhood. The city crew greatly appreciates your patience as we anxiously await the end of snow piles and return of spring.

## Sewer projects on the horizon

The City of Melcher-Dallas closely monitors the volume of water going out of the tower as well as water coming in to the sewer plant. There has been a progressive increase in the water intake at the sewer plant.

One of the reasons for the increased volume is the seepage of ground water into the sewer system. Cracks in aging pipe joints not only allow ground water to enter the sewer system but also allow tree roots to invade the pipes. The city will soon begin a project to improve many of the sewer lines in town.

The first phase of the sewer system upgrade, which will start this summer, will be to slip new fiberglass linings inside the aging sewer pipes and reconfigure select manholes. There should be little to no disruption of city streets caused by this project.

Another issue causing unacceptable levels of water entering the sewer treatment plant is the long-standing but now illegal practice of hooking sump pumps, gutters, and footing tiles directly into the city's sewer system. "Every resident who engages in the above practice should be looking at ways to change their property's use of the sewer system to be in compliance with State law," says Mike Damon, M-D's water supervisor. "Sump pumps, gutters and footing tiles should be draining on to the owner's property, rather than into the sewer system," added Damon.

The second and more expensive project will begin within the next few years. The city's waste water treatment plant will require reconstruction to meet new, stricter DNR waste water treatment guidelines designed to eliminate the risk of e-coli contamination and reduce nutrients, such as ammonia and nitro-phosphorus. The inability to hold the ground water intake to acceptable levels will result in the DNR requiring bigger and more expensive upgrades to the waste water plant. Homeowners can help minimize the cost of this expensive upgrade by complying with State law prohibiting the discharge of groundwater into the sewer system.



*Michele and Ivan enjoy their growing family and living in a place where everybody knows everybody.*



## Life as a “Lifer”

This month’s “Lifer” feature belongs to Michele and Ivan Ripperger. Michele (Fortune) Ripperger grew up in Melcher. Her sister and brother-in-law, Jackie and Jerry Lovell, live in the house where Michele grew up. Ivan grew up in the country south of town. He went to school at the Bauer country school until it closed. He joined the ranks of the Melcher-Dallas Saints when he was in junior high.

Michele and Ivan have three sons, Jason, Joe and Corey. Corey and Jason live in the Melcher-Dallas area and Joe lives in Grimes. They have seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Michele has been a beloved daycare provider in Melcher-Dallas for 36 years. She has enjoyed being a part of the lives of many great kids who have spent time in her home. Ivan retired six years ago, after working for 32 years at Hormel in Knoxville. He runs a repair shop out of his garage and is always willing to help you out if you need a tire repair.

Michele and Ivan lived in a small home in Melcher for a few years before buying what locals would know as the “Bagnall house.” The Bagnall family would be proud of the house they called home, which looks as pristine and charming as it did 35 years ago.

When asked if they ever considered leaving Melcher-Dallas, Michele gave a very quick “No” response. She says they love living in a small community where everybody knows everybody and are always willing to help each other.

From volunteer work with the M-D little league program to providing a safe and loving daycare option to so many families, the town is a better place for Michele and Ivan’s decision to raise a family and stay where their stories began.

## Your City Employees

Mike Damon—Sewer & Water Director  
Gary Comer—Streets & Parks Director  
Mike McCarty—Streets  
Jacob Hoch—Police Lieutenant  
Steve Johns—Chief of Police  
Ruth Ryun— Deputy Clerk  
Jenny Knust—Clerk/Treasurer  
Steph Ripperger—Admin. Assistant  
Lori Davis—Library Director  
Fran Smith—Library Assistant  
Bill Cooper & Janet McBride—Recycling

## Employee Spotlight

### Lori Dhabalt-Davis

#### Library Director



Lori, our longest-serving city employee,

began her position as Library Director in 2009. Lori lives in Melcher-Dallas with her two sons, Chris, who is in college at UNI and Cameron, a senior at M-D High.

Lori says she has enjoyed working as the Library Director and is most proud of our beautiful, new library. Lori lives on Main Street and says she likes spending time with friends and just watching cars go by.

Lori would like to invite everyone in the area to experience the library, where they will have access to free Wi-Fi, movies, kids’ activity packs and books. The library also provides copies, prints and faxes for a small fee.

Though you wouldn’t guess it by looking out the window, summer is coming, and Lori says the library will have a summer reading program for all ages. Thank you, Lori, for your dedication and welcoming smile to all who enter our beautiful city library.

## What's up with the library, Lori?

### New Books This Month

The Forgiving Jar (Wanda Brunstetter)

The Next Person you Meet in Heaven  
(Mitch Albom)

Diary of a Wimpy Kid, #13 Meltdown (Jeff  
Kinney)

Verses for the Dead (Douglas Preston)

A Delicate Touch (Stuart Woods)

This Blessed Earth (Ted Genoways)

I Survived the Battle of D-Day 1994  
(Lauren Tarshis)

Connections in Death (JD Robb)

Send Down the Rain (Charles Martin)

All In (Shelley Shepard Gray)

**D**id you know the Melcher-Dallas Public Library was founded in 1992? The original board members included Faye Starckovich, Kaye Langebartels, Dick Tate, Linda Cort and Amos Spoon. The library was temporarily housed in the southwest building known as My Flower Shop. Friends of the Library donated shelving, and fundraisers were held. The library eventually moved to what locals would know as the Mosher's Furniture Store on the north side of the square.

On November 1, 2016, the library moved to the newly remodeled building it currently calls home. Without the help of Friends of the Library and many dedicated volunteers, the library would not be where it is today.

The library provides classes, activities, movies and books. Lori is always looking for good ideas, and donations of cash and gently used books help keep the library offerings current and interesting. The library is also a great memorial opportunity for families who have lost a loved one.

Please check out the library's Facebook page at <http://www.melcher-dallas.lib.ia.us>. Upcoming events at the library include Roll and Read with Marion County Public Health (date to be published soon) and Summer Reading kick-off June 5th at 3:30 p.m. with the Science Center.

### A Trip Down Memory Lane

Do you remember:

- The sound and smell of the hissing radiators in the old schools?
- When Les Verwers would kindly and patiently spread and sweep up his special concoction when someone "lost their lunch" at school?
- When everyone went through a lunch line with three cooks dishing out items that you were not allowed to reject, even if you hated them?
- The moose head above the meat counter in Vito Zamberletti's store?
- When you piled in the car to have your family picture taken when the traveling photographer came to Hall's Hardware once a year?

### Do You Know Your City Ordinances?

True or False?

1. My neighbor cannot burn garbage in a burn barrel.
2. I don't have to pick up my dog's feces if it's not on public property.
3. I can have a junk car as long as it's licensed.
4. I can keep items I don't want in my house on my front porch.
5. I can have as many dogs and cats as I want.
6. I can buy 15 chickens and a rooster and let them roam in my fenced in back yard.

1. True. Only sticks, leaves and branches can be burned in the back yard—no personal garbage. 2. False. Owners must pick up feces from both private and public property. 3. False. License alone does not prevent a car from being deemed junk. 4. False. Household refuse may not be kept on the front porch. 5. False. Ordinance caps cats and dogs at three mature animals per household. 6. True and False. Ordinance allows 15 chickens and NO roosters within city limits. Chickens must be in a henhouse during non—daylight hours.