

The Melcher-Dallas Miner

Election Day Coming Soon

On Tuesday, May 7, 2019, the citizens of Melcher-Dallas will have the opportunity to make their preference known regarding use of the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), sometimes referred to as the “one cent tax.” It is an additional tax on goods purchased not just in Melcher-Dallas but throughout Marion County.

The city receives great pressure to take down derelict and dangerous buildings in the city limits. Demolition is expensive, with the cost of taking down the building on the square estimated at \$60,000. If the city cannot use the LOST funds to take down derelict buildings, it will have to take out a loan. The cost of repayment of the loan can be passed along to the taxpayers through the debt service levy, which is over and above the regular property tax levy rate.

Few cities that have passed the one-cent tax have done so with the tight restrictions that were attached to the M-D LOST funds. The City Council is asking voters to consider allowing the city to use the funds not only for roads but also for public safety, parks, economic development, upkeep and improvement of city-owned properties and any lawful purposes of the City of Melcher-Dallas.

The upkeep of city infrastructure and enhancement of public areas all place great demands on the city budget. Expanding the use of the LOST funds will help the city fund projects that would not be possible through general tax funds or would require an increase in the debt levy.

The election will be held at the Community Center from noon to 8 p.m. Questions regarding the election or the proposed repurposing of LOST funds may be directed to City Hall at 641-947-6501. Please plan to be a part of this important process.



Important Dates

- LOST repurpose election
May 7, noon to 8 p.m. at
the Community Center
- Water bills due by May
15 to avoid penalties and
by May 22 to avoid shut-
off.
- Tree planting the week of
May 6th
- Coal Miner’s Celebration
June 21st—23rd

Tired of litter in the ditches?

When the piles of snow finally melted, the ditches in town were wearing a fresh coat of litter. Although littering is a violation of a city ordinance, litterbugs usually do their work in secret—throwing out cups, pop cans and other refuse when nobody is looking.

At the suggestion of Ann Knipper, the M-D City Council recently approved the development of an “Adopt a Street” program. The city will provide colored trash bags, which can be placed in city dumpsters or at the end of a street to be picked up by city workers.

If you, your family, church group or friends would like to adopt an area of the city for litter removal, please call Jenny Knust, City Clerk, at 641-947-6501. Let’s do this thing!

Mayor

Barbara VanWyk

City Council

Brad Robbins

David Ernst

Chris Heaton

Mark Herold

Terry Fisher

(Mayor Pro-Tem)



NEWBIE NEWS



Move-ins are picking up in town! Please welcome a great new couple residing at 103 NE C Street.

Matthew Temple and Calyn Arndt moved to M-D from an apartment in West Des Moines. Matthew is an electrician and Calyn just landed a job at a law firm in Indianola. They previously lived in an apartment in West Des Moines.

When asked what brings them to Melcher-Dallas, Matthew and Calyn said they both prefer to live in a small town. They love their new house and are excited to have a yard big enough to plant a garden.

Matthew and Calyn said everyone has been so friendly, and they especially appreciate the help provided by Postmaster Deb. If you see this young couple, please let them know how glad you are they moved to town.

Spring has Sprung!

For awhile there, we thought maybe there was no such thing as spring. If any group of people ever deserved their spring, its lowans! It was a brutal winter that took its toll on everything from mental health to roads.

Culverts & Ditches

The city receives many calls regarding culverts and ditches. Homeowners are responsible for keeping their culverts in good working order and ensuring they are allowing water to flow. If you feel your ditch is the cause of water back-up, rather than your culvert, please contact City Hall.

The Grass has "Riz"

All citizens are reminded that the grass and weeds ordinance requires property owners to keep grass and weeds no higher than eight inches. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the city mowing the property. The city clerk will send one warning letter regarding grass and weeds.

Restore the Beauty of Main Street

The city recently applied for and received a grant of 200 trees from the Department of Natural Resources. Trees will arrive sometime the week of May 6, 2019. Varieties include black cherry (fruit bearing), oak and pine.

One of the most beautiful sights entering Melcher-Dallas from the south has been the mature trees lining Main Street. The emerald ash bore has devastated the old, beautiful ash trees. The city has spent thousands of dollars to remove the dead trees, and the process will continue for at least another year. This has left Main Street looking lonely and bare.

Because the cost of removing trees from the right-of-way has been high, the city will no longer allow planting in the right-of-way. But many homes along Main Street have plenty of room in the front yard for a shade tree.

The City of Melcher-Dallas will partner with the FFA to plant free trees in yards along Main Street. Main Street homes will be given preference, but there will be plenty of trees to go around. Trees can be planted anywhere on the property (not just the front yard). There are lists to sign up for trees at the Library and the Post Office. You can also call City Hall between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday to reserve your tree.

The best day to plant a tree was 30 years ago. The second best day to plant is today.

Additional violations will result in the city mowing all or part of the property without further notice and charging a \$100 fee. Most neighbors probably wouldn't think a yard with eight inch high weeds and grass is pretty, but at least you will be following the letter of the law.

Fix my Road!

City Hall receives many calls regarding cracks, potholes and other road issues. Most all these problems are directly related to the extreme weather we endured this winter.

The city is currently identifying roads that will be resurfaced this summer. Many seal-coated roads have crumbled and are in need of repair. If you have a driveway or other area of your property that you would like to have seal-coated at your expense, the city clerk is keeping a list to provide to the contractor. Call city hall if you want to have your property added to the list.



John and Madonna Milburn enjoy being close to family



Life as a “Lifer”

John & Madonna (Wadle) Milburn, both lifetime residents of Melcher and Dallas, married in 1970. Following his college graduation in the summer of 1970, John coached M-D high school baseball. After living in a few rentals in town, the Milburns built their home on the Dallas side of town in 1975. (Rumor has it they built on the sight of a competitive bicycle race-track complete with a cave in the middle for the girls to sit and watch as the boys raced round and round. If anybody has a picture of that racetrack, please bring it to city hall!).

John and Madonna raised two children in Melcher-Dallas. Daughter, Michelle, lives in Mission, Kansas, and son, John, lives on S45 just south of the overhead bridge. The Milburns have two grandchildren.

Madonna has operated her own beauty shop in town for many years. When I called to ask her about an interview, she was working, so I think it’s safe to say she has not yet hung up her scissors. Madonna’s beautiful singing voice has uplifted many a grieving family and attendees of Catholic services.

John retired as the Director of Manufacturing for Briggs Healthcare in West Des Moines after 23 years. He was a member of the Dallas City Council that first began exploring a merger with Melcher. John also served on the volunteer fire department and as Chairman of the Water Board. He is currently serving as a member of the City’s Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board, where his insights and dedication to his hometown are invaluable in crafting recommendations to move the city in a positive direction.

When asked if they ever considered moving out of Melcher-Dallas, John said they entertained the idea briefly before building an addition on to the house. They decided to stay because people are friendly and they liked being close to family. John and Madonna are devoted to family and spend lots of time next door helping John’s father, Ray.

From running a business that keeps the locals looking lovely to volunteering time and energy to ensure the long-term success of the City of Melcher-Dallas, the Milburns are valuable assets to the town they have always called home.

Your City Employees

Mike Damon—Sewer & Water Director
Gary Comer—Streets & Parks Director
Mike McCarty—Streets
Jacob Hoch—Police Lieutenant
Jamal Currica—Police Officer
Zachary Kalvig—Reserve Officer
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

Gary Comer, Streets & Park Director, will celebrate his five-year anniversary as a city employee in August. Gary lives with April and Carter on a farm east of town. He



has three grown children. Justin and his family live in Oklahoma. Chelsea and her family live in Texas, and Josh lives in Marshalltown. He has four grandchildren.

Gary has been a professional bull rider and has his own roofing business on the side. Anybody who knows Gary knows that he is a hard worker.

Gary loves horses and being outdoors. He has one goat and tells me he’s thinking about getting another.

The city is fortunate to have such a hard-working, dedicated employee. Gary is bundle of energy and always willing to help anybody with anything. Thanks, Gary, for the fantastic service you provide!

What's up with the library, Lori?

NEW BOOKS THIS MONTH

Wild Card by: Stuart Woods
The First Lady by: James Patterson
Forever Beach by: Shelley Noble
Wings of Fire books 1-5 by: Tui T Sutherland
Silent Night by: Danielle Steel
Run Away by: Harlan Coben
Never Tell by: Lisa Gardner
The Cliff House by: RaeAnne Thayne
The Last Second by: Catherine Coulter
Tinderbox by: Beverly Lewis
The Cornwalls are Gong by: James Patterson
Five Feet Apart by: Rachael Lippincott
Moon Rising by: Tui T. Sutherland
Me Without You by: Kelly Rimmer
An Amish Reunion by: Amy Clipston
The Fall of Crazy House by: James Patterson
Two Weeks and Best Family Ever by: Karen Kingsbury
What if It's True? by: Charles Martin
Good Hope Road by: Lisa Wingate
Marty Pants: Do Not Open by: Mark Parisi
Redemption by: David Baldacci
Neon Prey by: John Sandford
A Welcome at Our Door by: Amy Clipston

I am sure some of you have seen the library doll and wondered, what in the world is Lori doing now?

Let me introduce Matilda (Tilly). There is a lady in Waukee that anonymously donates these dolls and homemade doll clothes to 50 Iowa libraries. This is the first year we have been chosen to receive a doll.



The summer reading volunteers and I have decided to have fun with her. We are doing Tilly's Treks on Tuesday and posting her story to Facebook. Please stop in and meet her, read a book with her or just hang out.

If you see us out and about, stop and say "hi" to Tilly. You've probably never seen a doll with such an extensive and lovely wardrobe!

Library Fun Fact: In 1905, the Hagerstown, Maryland Public Library began the first public library service on wheels as a horse-drawn book wagon designed by Mary Lemist Titcomb, head of the library.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Do you remember:

- When kids used to hang out at "Liberty Rock" (by Cliff Norman's house)?
- When there was a bike racetrack around a cave where John & Madonna Milburn's house sits? (Rumor has it Gary Lwellyn was a great flagman 😊).
- When M-D kids rode the school bus to take swimming lessons at the big, fancy outdoor pool in Knoxville?
- When every kid in school cheated to try to win Miss Evan's sixth grade birdwatching contest?
- When kids piled in to the back of a truck to detassel corn in the Monroe/Prairie City area?
- When the Swing Show was such a big hit that it had to run two nights to make room for everyone who wanted to see it?

Do You Know Your City Ordinances?

1. My dog can bark as much as he wants. He's a dog—that's what dogs do.
2. We live in a small town, and I can ride my bike on the sidewalks on the square if I want.
3. If my friend throws litter out the window of my car while scooping the loop, I'm going to get the ticket.
4. My grouchy old neighbor tells me we can't play field hockey in the streets, even if nobody uses our street. I say, "What's it to him?"
5. Nobody walks on my sidewalk, so I have the right to choose whether I want to clear it of ice and snow.

1. False. Animal Control ordinance prohibits owners from allowing dogs to create a disturbance. 2. False. Ordinance prohibits bikes on sidewalks in the business district. 3. True. If police are unable to prove who littered, ticket will go to the auto owner. 4. Playing in the streets is unlawful unless city has blocked off an area for that purpose. 5. Sidewalk ordinance tasks home owners with responsibility for clearing sidewalks of snow and ice. City can clear sidewalks out of compliance and charge property owner for collection with property taxes.