

# The Melcher-Dallas Miner

## M-D receives Wellmark Grant

City leaders were recently notified that Wellmark will grant Melcher-Dallas \$18,340 under the Wellmark 3-Point Play Program. For every football field goal and basketball three-pointer, Wellmark donates funds to be granted to local cities for projects that promote safe and accessible places in which to be active. M-D was a winner because Hawkeye fans nominated their hometown for the award.

The council considered potential projects and settled on an upgrade/expansion of the city's sidewalk system. The sidewalk system has deteriorated significantly in the last 20 years, forcing walkers to the streets. The city's comprehensive plan and zoning regulations provide for a walking path from the south edge of town to the elementary school. The council looked at existing sidewalks and streets without sidewalks when considering the best path.

The council would like to use this grant to begin a project that could eventually connect the high school with the elementary school. This would be done in phases over the next five to ten years, depending on fund availability. The city will be seeking bids for sidewalks beginning at the edge of the elementary bus barn driveway heading west to the crosswalk, then going south on the west side of Lincoln to Church Street, and then heading west on Church, as far as funds will allow. A map showing the proposed full trail is available on the city's website.

Homeowners on the new sidewalk trail will be notified of the upcoming project. There will be no charge to homeowners, and the addition of new sidewalks will improve property values and create a safe walkway for walkers and strollers.

## City hall reopens in a limited capacity

The council recently agreed to create a walk-up window to allow residents the opportunity to receive change or a receipt when paying their utility bills. A window has been installed on the south side of the building. Residents can speak with the clerk or deputy clerk through the window and can obtain change or a receipt. Notary services are available inside City Hall upon request.

Until the Covid 19 pandemic has passed, the walk-up window will be the best means available to resume normal customer services while keeping the public and city employees safe. Customers who do not need change or a receipt are encouraged to continue to use the drop box.



### Important Dates

#### July 4

Independence Day

City Hall Closed July 3

#### July 14

Regular council meeting at Fire Station @ 6 p.m. (citizen attendance by video or teleconferencing)

#### July 15

Utility bills due to avoid penalties

### Mayor

Barbara VanWyk

### City Council

Mark Moon

Seth Williams

Chris Heaton

Mark Herold

Terry Fisher (Mayor Pro-Tem)

## Newbie News



*Paige,  
fiancée  
Tommy, and  
daughter  
Izzy.*

One of the city's newest (and friendliest) residents is Paige Higgins. She purchased the house on NE First that most older folks would know as Bert Logli's house. Paige grew up in and currently works in Indianola. She spent a few years in Arkansas but moved back to Iowa to be close to family.

When asked how she ended up in Melcher-Dallas, Paige says she just started looking for a house in the area and found her new home affordable. She says she has found local residents to be very friendly and welcoming. Paige is engaged to be married to her fiancée, Tommy, and has a seven-year old daughter, Izzy, who will be enrolled in M-D schools this fall.

Paige tells me that, in addition to the friendly people, they really love when the trains come through town. She says they can hear the rumble for about five minutes before they can see the train.

I asked Paige to be featured as a Newbie not just because she is super friendly, but because she has been very patient and understanding about the sewer project construction that has disrupted the road in front of her new house.

If you see Paige and family out and about, please introduce yourself and tell them how glad we are they chose to make a home in Melcher-Dallas.

## Is the city going to the dogs?

If you are a walker in Melcher-Dallas, you would probably answer the above question affirmatively. The City receives almost daily calls about dogs off the leash, dogs chasing people down the street, people opening the door and allowing several animals to run at large, and many other animal-related complaints.

The City of Melcher-Dallas has an extensive Animal Control and Protection Ordinance. Chapter 55 contains important laws and directives regarding animal ownership, including the following restrictions.

### 55.06 AT LARGE PROHIBITED

It is unlawful for any owner to allow an animal to run at large within the corporate limits of the City. "At large" means off the premises of the owner and not under the control of a competent person, restrained within a motor vehicle, or housed in a veterinary hospital or kennel.

City Hall rarely receives calls about dogs being off the leash on the owner's property. Calls come when the dog is leaving the owner's

property and roaming in the streets, on to neighboring properties or chasing pedestrians.

### 55.17 OWNER RESTRICTIONS

In summary, this section of the ordinance prohibits residents from owning more than three mature animals. Mature is defined as an animal over the age of six months. This includes cats and dogs. So households who have two dogs and two cats are out of compliance. Complaints are usually raised when residents are exceeding three animals and those animals are roaming and/or barking incessantly.

Chapter 55 in its entirety is posted on the city's website. Complaints about animals at large should be forwarded to City Hall with a picture of the animal with a date and time stamp. Animal-at-large citations can cost pet owners hundreds of dollars, so it's best to just follow the laws set forth in the City's animal control and protection policy. Your neighbors and the walkers in town will greatly appreciate your compliance.

## Water shut-offs and penalties returning soon

The City Council voted to temporarily suspend water shut-offs and penalties for late payment in March when the Covid 19 pandemic hit. At that time, the council voted to reconsider these temporary suspensions in July. While a final decision will not be made until the July 14th meeting, the Council wanted to make residents aware that it is likely penalties and shut-offs will return in July.

The City Council and clerk's office staff want to express gratitude to all residents who continued to keep their utility account with the city in good standing during difficult times. The City counts on utility payments to fund critical sewer and water services. The Council is grateful that residents did not take undue advantage of shut-off and penalty suspensions if their situation had not changed due to Covid 19.

## SCISWA resumes hazardous waste disposal services on a limited basis

The South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency (SCISWA) recently announced that they will resume collection of hazardous waste materials on Wednesday, July 8. Disposal will be by appointment only on Wednesdays at the Landfill in Tracy and the Transfer Station in Malcolm. Materials accepted include fluorescent bulbs, rechargeable batteries, spray paint, oil paint, and household chemicals. For a complete list of accepted wastes or for more information about the program, visit [www.sciswa.org](http://www.sciswa.org).

To make an appointment for hazardous waste disposal on Wednesdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., call the Tracy Landfill at 641-828-8545. The program is free to residents of Lucas, Marion, Monroe and Poweshiek counties.

## Are you living next to a nuisance property?

City ordinance no. 50, "Nuisance Abatement Procedure," sets forth conditions by which the City can deem a property to be a nuisance. The criteria that most often qualify a property as a nuisance are:

1. Weeds and brush. A dense growth of all weeds, vines, brush, or other vegetation in the City as to constitute a health, safety, or fire hazard.
2. Property. Real property maintained in such condition as it becomes defective, unsightly, or in such condition or deterioration or disrepair that the same causes substantial depreciation of the property values of the surrounding properties or is materially detrimental to properties.
3. Exterior wall surfaces. Exterior wall surfaces not properly painted and/or maintained with appropriate exterior wall materials, including wood, vinyl, steel or metal siding materials, stucco or exterior insulation finish system materials, brick or similar masonry materials, that are in all cases intact, not in a condition of deterioration, are of uniform coloration and are not patched with dissimilar materials. Plastic wrap material shall not be considered to be an acceptable siding material. No flaking or chipped paint or outer loose material dominates or detracts from the exterior appearance or structure.
4. Detached accessory structures. Detached structures must conform to standards outlined in exterior wall surfaces above. All doors and windows must be of functional design and in proper working order. (This means that "tarp sheds" that are made of a tarp over a frame are not allowed).

## Did you complete your survey?

Sewer and water bills mailed in June included a survey regarding the future of the building that was the original coal miner's haul. The building formerly housed the city's library and currently houses the coal miner's museum.

The city has been paying thousands of dollars each year for upkeep, in addition to approximately \$30,000 in grants procured by the museum board. The museum hosts very few tours due to lack of availability of tour guides. Rather than continue to pump money into the building, the council is considering whether it would be cost effective and feasible to convert the space to house city hall or allow the building to sit empty and eventually tear it down. The latest estimate for demolition of the building is \$100,000.

The council is attempting to determine if there is interest in salvaging the historic building using available Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) dollars to facilitate renovation over the next two to three years. This option would also free up needed space for the police department. The plan includes moving the food pantry to the area now housing the city council chambers and selling the current food pantry building to help offset costs and minimize the city's building maintenance costs.

The council seeks resident feedback in order to make this important decision. Please return your survey to City Hall no later than July 10th. Surveys can be dropped in the payment box outside City Hall or mailed to 305 D Main East, 50062.



## New playground equipment installed June 12 and 13, 2020

Thanks to a grant from the Marion County Foundation and the Local Option Sales Tax, the city added two beautiful pieces of playground equipment. Volunteers were critical in the swift installation of these colorful additions to the city park.

Thanks to: Nick Bernard, Tanner Scheffers, Scott Northcote, Jr. Noftsgar, Terry Fisher, Mandy and Joe Branson, Barry Fisher, Tammy Herold, Lisa Riebhoff, Shantell and Kevin Cottingham, Rick Long, Sawyer Wadle, Clayton Starkovich, Chris Heaton, Gary Comer & Mike McCarty.

A special thanks to Josh Beal, Northcote Locker, for cooking up ribeyes for volunteers and to Kevin Dittmer for use of his "digger." A very special thanks to councilman Mark Herold for his tireless efforts to see this project through from start to finish, including lining up volunteers. It was truly a community effort!



## City-Wide Clean-up set for September 19

### Tricks to save water

1. **Use your dishwasher instead of washing by hand.** You can save as much as 20 gallons using your high efficiency dishwasher.
2. **Use the car wash.** Taking your car to the local carwash can save up to 100 gallons of water each year.
3. **Shower with a bucket.** Capture a gallon or two of water that could be used to water plants or flowers.
4. **Conduct regular leak hunts.** A 1/16 opening in your faucet could waste 100 gallons a day. A toilet running wide open can use thousands of gallons in a billing cycle.
5. **Invest in a new efficient appliance or fixture.** Water-saving showerheads, faucets, washers and toilets can save you thousands of gallons each year.
6. **Change your garden hose nozzle.** Using an automatic shut-off nozzle can save five gallons of water per minute.
7. **Turn off the faucet while shaving and brushing teeth.**
8. **Install a rain barrel for outdoor watering.** Many home improvement stores sell simple kits to capture rain water to be used for watering.
9. **Cover your swimming pool.** Thousands of gallons can be lost due to evaporation.
10. **Compost food** instead of using a garbage disposal. Compost is great garden fertilizer.
11. **Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.** This prevents wasting of water while waiting for it to cool down.
12. **Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps.** Hosing off concrete can waste thousands of gallons each year.
13. **Water flowers and plants during the cool parts of the day.** This helps to avoid evaporation.

The City council has rescheduled clean-up day to September 19, 2020, from 8 to 11 a.m. on the east side of the square. This year there will be no claw truck available, but shorter dumpsters will be available to allow residents to lift larger items up and into the dumpsters. The hazardous waste disposal trailer is not available this year. Please call the South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency at 641-828-8545 to make arrangements to dispose of hazardous waste (see more information page 3).

Residents may bring a limit of three TVs and computer monitors at a cost of \$10 each. Printers, keyboards and other computer parts are free of charge. Latex paint can be placed in dumpsters if it is dried out or mixed with kitty litter.

The city will accept furniture, bed frames, mattresses, carpet, drywall, paper, old toys, old clothes, dishes, sinks, toilets, cabinets or vanities, and small wood projects (cut in to four foot pieces). Items that are not accepted include construction debris, tires, concrete and yard waste. The city's brush dump is always open to allow residents to dispose of yard waste.

Dave Ripperger will be available to take your used batteries, used (metal) appliances and scrap metal. Dave will also accept microwaves without charging a fee. If you would like to make an appointment for Dave to pick up on an alternate date, he can be reached at 515-250-1809.

The city is pleased to be able to offer this service free of charge and hope that residents will take advantage of the opportunity to keep their properties looking clean and orderly.

### Help Gary watch for leaks

Did you know that one water leak can cost the city thousands of gallons of water in a day? Gary and Mike monitor output from the tower vs. what is billed to customers and are able to pinpoint how much water the city is losing.

Ordinance 90, "Water Service System," sets forth responsibility for water service piping. In summary, the city holds responsibility for the water shut-off at the main (curbstop), and the homeowner is responsible for repairs needed between the curbstop and the home. Many times homeowners do not address a leak in the yard promptly because it is not affecting their water bill, but it can cost the city thousands of gallons in water loss. Chapter 90 gives the city the right to fix the problem that the homeowner has not addressed in a timely manner and assess the charges to the property.

If you have a spot in your yard with grass that is really green or notice water pooling in a ditch anywhere in town, please call City Hall. Gary and Mike can test the water to see if there is chlorine present, which may indicate it's a city water leak.

# Not your usual Coal Miner's celebration

**D**ue to the Covid 19 pandemic, the M-D Fire Department and Coal Miner's Committee decided to forgo the usual social gathering in the park, opting instead for an around-town parade and fireworks. The parade traveled around a designated route in town, and fireworks usually held Friday evening were displayed on Saturday evening.



*Awesome fireworks on Saturday*



*Agape Farm was the lone float in the parade.*



*Herman would sure be proud to see his classic wrecker full of grandchildren & great grandchildren.*



*Thank you to local citizens who support the rescue team with monetary contributions and support. Special thanks to all the hard-working, dedicated volunteer staff.*



*M-D Fire Department always a staple in the Coal Miner's parade (and they always have great candy too).*

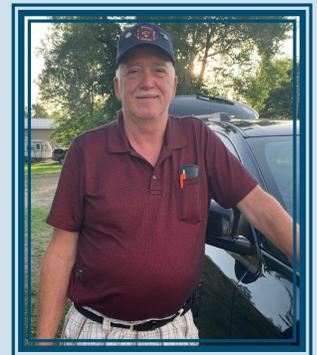


*Chief Hoch and family representing the M-D Police Department.*

## Your City Employees

- Gary Comer**—Sewer & Water Director
- Mike McCarty**—Streets/Sewer/Water
- Jacob Hoch**—Chief of Police
- Dylan Forkner**—Police Officer
- Zachary Kalvig**—Reserve Officer
- Stephanie Ripperger** — Deputy Clerk
- Jenny Knust**—Clerk/Treasurer
- Lori Davis**—Library Director
- Fran Smith**—Library Assistant
- Bill Cooper & Janet McBride**—Recycling
- Curt Seddon**—Fire Chief

## Council Spotlight



**M**ark Herold and his wife, Tammy, recently built a beautiful new home just west of City Hall. Mark is currently serving his second term on the City Council.

Mark and Tammy raised two daughters, Amber and LeAnn, in the M-D School District. They have five grandchildren, Hunter, Easton and Gage Ripperger and Korbin and Zoey Grabill. Tammy recently retired as M-D school's preschool teacher.

Mark has served on the museum board and is always willing to take on a project and see it through to completion. Thanks, Mark, for your dedicated service to Melcher-Dallas.

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

**I** MISS YOU! I hope you are all staying safe and healthy. I am still here on shortened hours but anticipate reopening soon. There will be special protocols in place to allow for social distancing, increased cleaning, and other precautions to keep everyone safe. Please watch for more information posted in front of the library. All patrons must be willing to follow protocols in place in order to come in to the library. Curbside pick-up will still be available for those who are not comfortable coming in to the library.

I have had some questions about taking donations of books. Please wait until we are open again full time. Keep cleaning out your closets and finding old treasures. You might even find a book you haven't read.

Don't forget we offer e-books through **bridges. overdrive.com**. This is a free service provided by the library and all you need is a library card and internet. If you need to know your library card number give me a call at 641-947-6700. Hope to see you all again soon!

**Lori and Fran**

### NEW BOOKS THIS MONTH

<i>Firefly Lane</i> , Kristin Hannah	<i>The Cowboy Wins a Bride</i> , Cora Seton
<i>Hit List</i> , Carolyn Brown	<i>A Forgotten Murder</i> , Jude Deveraux
<i>Skin Game</i> , Stuart Woods	<i>The Goodbye Man</i> , Stuart Woods
<i>Undone</i> , Kelly Rimmer	<i>The Sisters Café</i> , Carolyn Brown
<i>Camino Winds</i> , Jeffery Deaver	<i>Wrecking Ball</i> , Jeff Kinney
<i>No Hero</i> , Mark Owen	<i>Masked Prey</i> , John Sanford
<i>Embedded</i> , Bill Kalvsky	<i>The Empty Nesters</i> , Carolyn Brown
<i>The Institute</i> , Stephen King	<i>Someone Like You</i> , Karen Kingsbury
<i>Cake Boss</i> , Buddy Valastro	<i>The Water Keeper</i> , Kelly Rimmer
<i>The Love Letter</i> , Rachael Hauck	<i>The Rise of Magicks</i> , Nora Roberts
<i>A Love for Leah</i> , Kristina Riggle	<i>A Dash of Christmas</i> , Samantha Chase
<i>Henry's Sisters</i> , Cathy Lamb	<i>The Two-Date Rule</i> , Tawna Fenske
<i>One Little Lie</i> , Colleen Coble	<i>Meant to be Yours</i> , Susan Mallery
<i>The Giving Heart</i> , Tony Blake	<i>A Life without Water</i> , Marci Bolden

### NEW MOVIES THIS MONTH

*Little Women* ❖ *Doolittle*

## Mediacom removing a channel

**T**he City was recently notified that on or about June 29, Mediacom will no longer carry V-me, Channel 638 in the channel line-up for our area. Questions can be directed to Lee Grassley, Senior Manager, Government Relations, at 319-395-9699, ext. 3461, or lgrassley@mediacomcc.com.

## A Trip Down Memory Lane

### Do you remember:

- When kids piled in to the back of a truck to detassel corn in Prairie City and Monroe?
- When it was a big deal to ride your bike over to the Melcher side of town if you lived in Dallas (and vice versa)?
- The boiler room on the way to the lunchroom in the old high school building (where the teachers went to smoke)?
- Mr. Oliver's physics class egg tossing contest, where the goal was to toss your egg out a second floor window without breaking it?
- When honor study hall students were allowed to roam, play cards, and listen to music, in the front hallway?

*(If you have special memories of growing up in Melcher-Dallas, please e-mail them to mdcityhall@windstream.net.)*

## Do You Know Your City Ordinances?

1. I like to blow the grass from my ditch on to the road, because my yard looks a lot better. That's not a violation of any city ordinances.
2. If I'm walking home and can't quite make it in time, it's okay to relieve myself on my neighbor's sidewalk.
3. My house has some rotten siding, so I can put up some tin on the bad spots until I can afford new siding.
4. Sure, my kids have a lot of toys in the yard, but that's not hurting anybody.
5. I can park six cars, two campers, and two jet skis in my yard. It's my property.

1. False. City ordinance 135 prohibits blowing grass into the streets. 2. False. City ordinance #41 prohibits urinating on both public and private property. 3. False. Ordinance #50 prohibits patching of external wall surfaces with dissimilar materials. 4. Chapter 51 lists toys and children's toys as junk when they interfere unreasonably with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property. 5. Chapter 69 prohibits large numbers of vehicles, water craft, trailers, materials, supplies and equipment because it creates a nuisance for adjoining properties.