



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association  
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Des Moines, IA 50310

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# Merle Hay Neighborhood Newsletter

## Kick Off the New Year at MHNA's Annual Meeting on January 17th!

Please join the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association for its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 17 at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. We expect to have a guest speaker from Midwest Basement Systems. Public safety updates and crime statistics will be shared, along with the latest neighborhood news. We'll also have our annual report from the MHNA president and discuss neighborhood goals for 2019.

Refreshments will be provided. Please mark your calendars and remember to invite your neighbors!

## Update on Hy-Vee's Fast & Fresh Project

MHNA was recently contacted by a Hy-Vee rep who said the company plans to reduce the interior square footage of the Fast & Fresh store that's under construction at the northwest corner of Merle Hay and Hickman roads. The new store will go from 10,000 square feet to 8,000 square feet. According to Hy-Vee, the biggest changes are less interior seating and no hard liquor section. MHNA is told that the changes are being approved administratively by city staff, and the store is expected to open in the latter part of June.

## Become a Member of MHNA

By becoming a member of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association, you help make a difference in our community. Membership dollars help support the events and activities of our all-volunteer association. Membership is open to anyone who lives, rents or owns property, and to businesses within the neighborhood boundaries. Non-residents may also join as non-voting members. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all dues and donations are tax-deductible.

Membership dues are as follows:

- Individual: \$15
- Couple: \$30
- Business: \$30
- Church, School, or other Non-profit: \$10

Dues for 2019 can be paid in person at association meetings, or mailed to:

Merle Hay Neighborhood Association  
PO Box 31036  
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Thank you for supporting MHNA in the upcoming year!

## More Trees Planned for Urbandale Avenue

Have you driven down Urbandale Avenue recently? In October, more than 40 flowering ornamental and shade trees were planted in the boulevard between Merle Hay Road and 48th Street. This spring, the City of Des Moines Forestry Division hopes to plant even more trees in the city-owned right-of-way, which is the area between the curb and sidewalk. While this public "parking" or "parkway" area is typically between 3' to 6' wide along most streets in the Merle Hay neighborhood, it is up to 40' wide along some areas of Urbandale Avenue! While the City will plant the trees at no cost, they ask that adjacent homeowners assist with watering, which is critical to establishment of the trees. City staff will be reaching out to adjoining property owners in the upcoming month to coordinate and organize the beautification effort.



## Connect with Us!

Facebook: @MerleHayNeighborhood  
Website: [www.merlehay.org](http://www.merlehay.org)

## YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED.....

### Neighborhood Goals for 2019

What would you like to see happen in the neighborhood in 2019? MHNA wants to hear from you! You can share your thoughts and suggestions when MHNA hosts its annual meeting on January 17. You can also reach out to us on Facebook (@MerleHayNeighborhood) or email us at [merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com](mailto:merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com). We recently asked folks on Facebook what's going well and not so well in the neighborhood. Here is some of what we have heard:

» Franklin Avenue from 63rd Street all the way to 41st Street needs to be repaved, and MHNA was encouraged to raise the concern with the City Council.

» We're told that speeding on Cummins Parkway has been problematic, and there's a concern it will worsen once the repaving project is complete.

» Speeding and large truck traffic has been a growing concern on Franklin Avenue, and the city's Traffic & Transportation Division has been alerted.

» We've heard that there are concerns with loitering and late-night activity at Riley Park. MHNA will reach out to our neighborhood NBSD officer and the Parks & Recreation Department to make them aware of this issue.

These are the kinds of things we need to hear! The more communication we have from residents and businesses, the better. Please make your voice heard!

## Officer and Board Elections

Elections for MHNA's 2019 Board of Directors will be held at our annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 17, at the Northwest Community Center. Elections will be held for president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and three board members.

If you are interested in running for an officer or board position, please send an email to Marilyn Nizzi at: [mmnizzi@outlook.com](mailto:mmnizzi@outlook.com).

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor when we meet on January 17. Membership dues must be current to run for a seat on the Board of Directors. Please consider running for a seat to help serve OUR neighborhood! Don't forget the MHNA motto: Working **Together** to Make a Difference!

## 2019 MHNA Meeting Dates

MHNA meets on the third Thursday in January, April, July, and October. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and are held at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. The 2019 meetings will be held on January 17, April 18, July 18, and October 17. Please mark your calendars!

Merle Hay Neighborhood Association  
"Working Together to Make a Difference"  
PO Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310

*January 2019*



## Donate Box Tops for Education to Hillis Elementary School

Volunteers from the Hillis Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization will once again collect Box Tops for Education at the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association's next quarterly meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 17. The person who brings the most Box Tops will get a gift card from ACE Hardware! To be eligible, please place your Box Tops for Education in a baggie along with your name and contact information so you can be contacted if you win the gift card. Visit [https:// www.boxtops4education.com/](https://www.boxtops4education.com/) for more information about how the Box Tops program benefits schools. Thanks for your help!

## Food & Clothing Drive Recap

MHNA would like to thank and recognize everyone who contributed to this year's "Keep the Kids Warm" clothing drive for elementary school children in our neighborhood. This year's drive benefited Hillis Elementary School. Thanks to the generosity of our neighbors, we were able to donate snow boots, snow pants, sweatpants, and other clothing to Hillis students. Special thanks to Kathy Battles and Marilyn Nizzi for doing the shopping! And thanks again to everyone who supported this very worthwhile program.

We also want to thank everyone who donated food for the less fortunate. The donations collected at MHNA's October quarterly meeting were donated to the DMARC Food Pantry program.

## RESOLVE TO GET INVOLVED IN BETTERING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association. Making 2019 an even better year for residents and businesses depends on all of us working together. We need your help! MHNA has great opportunities for volunteers to make a difference in our community. Consider getting involved in any of the following MHNA committees:

**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS** – Assist with sharing the good news of our neighborhood through the newsletter and social media. This includes writing, photography, and soliciting ads.

**BEAUTIFICATION** – Help beautify the neighborhood with planning and maintaining flower beds, tree plantings, and other cleanup projects.

**SOCIAL EVENTS** – Plan and organize events that bring neighbors together, including National Night Out, Merle Hay Day, block parties and ice cream socials.

**SCRUB DAY** – The City's popular SCRUB program relies on neighborhood associations and volunteers to make this annual event possible.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS** – Do you have a special interest in projects such as park improvements, traffic calming, sidewalks and infrastructure, or commercial corridors? Let us know!

Interested? We would love to hear from you! Send us an email at [merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com](mailto:merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com).



## Annual Holiday Lights Contest

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association sponsored its 14th annual Holiday Lights contest in December. Our judges tell us there were a lot of nicely decorated homes this year! Judges were looking for creativity, originality, holiday spirit, neatness and theme coordination. The three homes that won \$25 gift certificates this year are:

- 1346 Merle Hay Road
- 127 56th Street
- 5707 Ovid Avenue

Honorable mention went to 1819 62nd Street, 2738 64th Street, and 3209 54th Street. Homes that won in the last three or so years were not eligible. Thank you to April Wyss, James Moos, and Frank Keifer for judging! And thank you to everyone who decorated their homes this holiday season!

## Snow Ordinance Notifications

Did you know that the City's Public Works Department estimates a 33% reduction in plow times when off-street parking is enforced? To keep you informed of snow removal operations and help clear neighborhood streets as efficiently as possible, we encourage you to sign up for notifications!

**TEXT:** Text DMSNOW to 96000 to sign up for snow parking restriction notifications.

**EMAIL:** Sign up for email notifications at [dmgov.org/Pages/subscribers.aspx](http://dmgov.org/Pages/subscribers.aspx)

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Follow Des Moines Public Works on Twitter at @dmdpw or like them on Facebook at [facebook.com/DMDPW](https://facebook.com/DMDPW) for another way to see if it's safe to park on the street.

**WEBSITE:** See what's going with snow removal operations before you leave the house by checking [dmsnow.org](http://dmsnow.org).

## O'Donnell ACE Hardware Home Improvement Corner

### Protect Your Home from Freezing Pipes!

As temperatures drop in January and February, you want to keep an eye out for frozen pipes. Wrapping pipes in foam insulation helps prevent pipes from freezing. Fit the insulation snugly around any pipes that are six inches away from outside walls or run through areas of the home that are not heated. Tape the insulation joints for even more protection. If a pipe does freeze, slow thawing works best to prevent the pipe from bursting. If a pipe bursts, shut off water supply until repairs are made. Locate your main water valve now so you can quickly turn it off in an emergency.

For more tips and advice stop by and talk to one of our experts or go to [acehardware.com](http://acehardware.com) and follow us on Facebook at O'Donnell Ace Hardware Hickman Rd Des-Moines. Visit our local ACE Hardware for all of your home improvement needs!

### ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

MHNA appreciates the support of our local neighborhood businesses. Each quarterly newsletter reaches nearly 4,300 households in our area. For more information, please email us at [merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com](mailto:merlehayneighborhood@gmail.com)



## Heading south for Spring Break? Sign up for VACATION WATCH!

Are you planning a spring get-away or post-holiday vacation? Did you know that police officers assigned to our neighborhood will drive by your home on regular patrols as time allows? **VACATION WATCH** is a service provided by the Des Moines Police Department to help keep our homes safe. To sign up, just call the non-emergency Des Moines Police Dispatch office at 283-4811.

Here are a few additional home safety tips from our friends at the Des Moines Police Department:

- Let TRUSTED NEIGHBORS know you are gone for extended periods of time and advise them to contact the police when they see suspicious activity.
- Try to have packages and mail picked up by family or trustworthy neighbors so they are not piling up on the porch. The U.S. Postal Service will also hold your mail upon request.
- Have adequate lights around the exterior and interior of your house. Set your lamps on timers.
- Close all blinds/curtains so valuable items can't be seen in plain view.
- If you have a security alarm system, PLEASE USE IT.
- KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS. Have block parties or barbeques. Outdoor activities will help neighbors get to know each other and build relationships with kids as well as adults. These relationships will help build trust, community safety and community responsibility.

## Sign Up for Emergency Alerts

Des Moines residents are encouraged to sign up for CodeRED, a free community notification system that provides alerts about critical, time-sensitive information. Keep informed about floods and other natural disasters, missing people, terrorist threats, evacuation notices, street closings and more with this automated system administered by Polk County Emergency Management. Alerts can be received by phone, text or email. The City of Des Moines uses CodeRED as one way to communicate with its residents. Notifications are targeted to specific locations impacted by an event. While land lines will be notified in a specified area, residents must register if they would like to be notified by cell phone or email. To receive notifications, sign up at [polkcountyiowa.gov/emergency-management](http://polkcountyiowa.gov/emergency-management) and click on the CodeRED box, or download the CodeRED Mobile Alert app in the App Store or Google Play. Calls from CodeRED will come from 866-419-5000 for emergency notifications and 855-969-4346 for general notifications.

## Cummins Parkway Flood Damage Repair and Storm Sewer Improvements

In response to damage sustained during a flash flood event, this project provides for repair and replacement of pavement on Cummins Parkway between University Avenue and Merle Hay Road. The existing storm sewer system was also repaired and upgraded to improve intake capacity. Des Moines Asphalt & Paving is performing the work at an estimated cost of \$343,607. The work has been completed except for the southbound lanes from University Avenue to Carpenter Avenue. The section from University Avenue to Carpenter Avenue will be completed in the spring of 2019.

