

Flags Fly High In The City Of Flags



Don Parks, a native of Davison and for the past years the supervisor of Davison Township was one of the originators of the "City of Flags" idea for Davison. He served in the Navy, including time on the Yorktown as a bos'n mate. Recently in his office in the Davison Township Municipal Center on Irish Road, Mr. Parks talks about flags, Davison and the people who are so proud to fly Old Glory.

Q. How did it all get started?

A. I guess it was around 1960-61 and as a Jaycee, I had been involved in setting up a program to sell flags in the community. But then we started going a little further. Along with selling the American flag, we would go out on holidays and set them up in the downtown area. We'd start at the crack of dawn putting up the flags and it was 100 percent participation.

Q. This goes on in a lot of towns. Why is Davison different?

A. Probably the difference is that we do more of it in Davison. It's a year-around thing with us and once the idea of the City of Flags

hit, more and more people became involved.

Q. Where did the City of Flags tag come from?

A. It has to go back to the mid-sixties. And the way it really came about was that Don Smith (now deceased but for many years the city manager and legendary figure in the community) and I were putting up flags for the Fourth of July. It was a beautiful morning, the sun just coming up, a nice breeze blowing and those flags really curling around in the breeze — everything was just perfect. As we looked down the street at the flags we had just set up, we somehow both agreed right then and there that with all those

beautiful American flags flying, this truly had to be the City of Flags.

Q. How did idea happen to travel from there?

A. We, meaning the Jaycees, took our idea to the City Council and asked for a resolution declaring Davison the City of Flags. Along about this time a magazine writer happened to be in our town doing an article on something, I don't remember what, but in his story he referred to us as the City of Flags. Then along about this time the Council passed the resolution, officially declaring Davison the City of Flags, and since then we have been promoting the idea every way we can.

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Q. Back in the 60's, we were in a period of patriotic discontent, what with the Vietnam protests, sit-ins and other demonstrations — including flag burnings. Did this influence your activities in Davison?



A. Certainly. We didn't like it. For one of our Homecoming parades we built a float recognizing all of America's allies in the Vietnam struggle. We followed this up by sending letters to these various countries, saying in effect, that we're proud of the American flag. We even sent a letter to the American military commander, General Westmoreland. The response from our campaign was tremendous. We heard from many of the foreign countries along with the General. There was even a story about Davison and its flags in Stars and Stripes, the official military publication.

Q. What does it mean to you.

City of Flags?

A. To me, it says that the people of the Davison community are patriotic and appreciate this great country we live in. They are willing to overlook the small problems that we always seem to have, but they keep in mind the main thrust of what this country stands for. We are proud to fly the American flag anytime because it represents the best of what this country stands for.

Q. Does this mean that if I come to Davison on any holiday I will see more American flags flying than I would in some other town?

A. It certainly does. I would estimate that three-fourths of the homes here have flags and they fly them proudly on just about every occasion they have. In fact, there are some residences that fly Old Glory practically every day of the year.

Q. If I want to get my own flag, what do I do?

A. In Davison we've made it very easy and very economical to own a flag. Just ask any Jaycee or walk into the Chamber of Commerce office on Main street and you've got a flag.

Q. How much?

A. I'm glad you asked that question. Here's the price list: \$12.50 will buy a 3' by 5' flag; \$20 for a 4' by 6' and the kit with pole sells for \$16.

Q. How's business?

A. Well, the Chamber tells me that there is hardly a week goes by that someone doesn't come in and buy a flag. Add to that what the Jaycees sell, so I would say that business is pretty good.

Q. One last question, how do you think Davison people feel about living in the City of Flags?

A. I have to say we are all very proud of it. We are a real old-fashioned, red, white and blue community — and we love it.