

Volume 1, Issue 1

JANUARY 2010



MERIT PARKING COMPANY:



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- "TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD?" WHAT WE PLAN TO DO IN 2010
- UPCOMING DOWNTOWN EVENTS
- DO IT YOURSELF: DENT REMOVAL
- EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNT FOR 2010
- MCKINNEY PLACE: PARKING WITH A PURPOSE

Inside this issue:

Not Just Parking— pg 2

What's Happening in
Downtown Houston— pg 3

Helpful How-To Advice—
pg 3

Special Offer!- pg 4

Spotlight on a Location—
pg 4

LETTER FROM THE CEO



Happy New Year!

Merit Parking Company is excited to be celebrating our 10 year anniversary this year! It is with great pride that over the past decade, we have shown our landowners and property managers how to increase parking facility revenues by 30% or more without any reduction in the quality of their service. We wish to thank those who gave us the opportunity to prove and establish ourselves.

We are also proud of our parking construction division. We responded to what we perceived to be a void in the specialized area of parking related construction and repair and have been inundated with requests for work. Our initial idea was to help friends and existing clients in this area, but we have found the need for this type of service to be state-wide.

As we start our second decade, we look forward to our continued relationships with our old friends and customers and to forging new relationships with those property owners and managers looking to maximize their parking investment.

Let us show you how we can make your 2010 a profitable and successful year!

David W. Evans
Merit Parking Co.
President & CEO

BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR...

MAKING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS & KEEPING THEM

The holidays are over, and the new year is upon us. Time to give away old clothes, and get rid of bad habits. So, what do the majority of people want to commit to doing (or rather, stop doing) for 2010? Here's a list of resolutions that made the top ten on About.com:

Top 10 New Year's Resolutions

1. Spend more time with Family & Friends
2. Fit in Fitness
3. Tame the Bulge
4. Quit smoking
5. Enjoy life more
6. Quit drinking
7. Get out of debt
8. Learn something new
9. Help others
10. Get organized



So, now you have made them, but how do you keep them for the next 365 days? According to Maia Szalavitz of TIME magazine, the best ways to keep your resolutions for 2010 are:

- **Don't Kid Yourself**- Successful moderators decide in advance how much is "too much" - and stick to their limit, no matter what. The point is to learn how to hold yourself accountable.
- **Quit Cold Turkey - Temporarily**- The best way to stay on course is frequent self-monitoring; use as many behavior-modification tools, support groups and programs as you can.
- **Do What the Dalai Lama Would Do**- Being mindful may involve traditional meditation, in which you sit quietly and observe your thoughts and breathing without judgment. But here, it is also used to focus awareness on thoughts and feelings that lead to unwanted behavior. Simply recognizing the triggers to relapse can help you choose not to give into them.
- **Don't Try to Scare Yourself Straight**- Reward yourself for sticking to your limits and focus on the benefits of changing.
- **Get Better Friends**-Consciously and unconsciously, people tend to imitate those around them. That's why the latest research shows that things like happiness, quitting smoking and obesity can spread like a contagion through social networks. So, surround yourself with friends who can also be role models.



Lastly, Szalavitz advises that "if you regularly engage in meaningful activities that give you pleasure - whether it's visiting friends, picking up a hobby, taking a class or doing volunteer work - you'll simply have less time to crave or engage in the behavior that you want to reduce."

Not Just Parking.... "To Build or Not to Build?"

Merit Parking began its parking operations in January of 2001, but it didn't take long before we realized that there was more to the industry than parking. In 2007, Merit introduced a construction division focusing on concrete and asphalt repair, maintenance, and general contracting of any parking-related facility. Since then, we have expanded our portfolio of services offered and have been able to become a more hands-on asset to property managers whose facilities we manage.



Unfortunately, the slow and almost decreasing trend in commercial construction has hit many companies hard over the last year. Budgets are tighter than ever, and jobs are being left unfinished. This economic low affects retail and Industrial- related construction projects as well. How does this affect our business? Adrian Silva, General Manager of the construction division at Merit Parking, has an optimistic take on what the new year will bring.

"Although many may be intimidated by this news, we look at it all as an opportunity to continue to set us apart from the rest and grow in a controlled manner and offer that same personal attention to all of our customers."



Silva also commented what his plan of action will be for the rest of this year through the penny-pinching economic struggles that weigh down many in this industry. "For 2010, our concern and our success will be that of keeping our costs low to earn us the job and following up by personal care and daily visits during construction management."

"Our concern and our success will be that of keeping our costs low to earn us the job"

*Adrian Silva,
GM of construction,
Merit Parking Co.*

What's Happening in Downtown Houston

We offer parking services for all of these events at Lyric Center & Market Square Garage & Lot!

A Chorus Line

Hobby Center
January 5-7

Wonderland

Alley Theater
January 15– February 14

The Planets—An HD Odyssey

Jones Hall
January 21, 23, & 24

Mrs. Mannerly

Alley Theater
January 29– February 28

The Turn of the Screw

Wortham Theater Center
January 29, 31 & February 6, 10, & 13

Go to

www.houstontx.gov/joneshall/boxoffice.htm or

www.houstontheaterdistrict.org

www.houstontheaterdistrict.org

******Lyric Center***– located on 440 Louisiana

******Market Square***– located on the 300 block on Milam



Nearby Restaurants & Lounges:

- ◆ Shadow Bar
- ◆ Cotton Exchange Bar & Lounge
- ◆ Red Cat Jazz Café
- ◆ Brewery Tap
- ◆ Les Givral's
- ◆ Birraporetti's
- ◆ Cabo Mix-Mex Grill
- ◆ Don Diego Coffee & Wine Bar
- ◆ La Carafe
- ◆ Hearsay Gastro Lounge



Helpful How-to Advice

"I parked inside the lines, so what's with the dent?"

Has this ever happened to you?

You pull into a garage or lot, search around for a vacant spot, and you make sure you park inside the lines to avoid crowding another parker's spot. You go into your office or destination of choice, and get back to your vehicle only to find that others were *obviously* not as considerate and meticulous as you were in parking their vehicle.

So there you are, staring at the small dent in your vehicle. Never mind who did it because even a mathematician wouldn't be able to come up with how many cars came and went while you were gone. The only thing left to wonder is "how do I pop this dent out of my car?"

Wisebread.com contains user blogs on different ways to "live large on a small budget." Among the helpful suggestions are tips and tricks to removing dents that can save you a great deal of money and allow you to have your dent-free vehicle again. Just ask Paul Michael, who has captured MSNBC's attention with his clever how-to advice. Here are a few household items that he recommended viewers use in his posting in April 2007:

- ◆ Dry ice
- ◆ Hairdryer and an air duster
- ◆ Lighter, aluminum foil and an air duster

To post your own advice or to view more on this article, **go to www.wisebread.com**.

"The only thing left to wonder is 'how do I pop this dent out of my car?'"



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Spotlight on a Location: MCKINNEY PLACE

This month's spotlight is focused on the McKinney Place garage, which is situated in an ideal location in the Skyline District of the downtown area on the corner of McKinney and Travis. Parkers include visitors and employees of Downtown businesses including those located in buildings such as El Paso Energy Building, Reliant Energy Plaza, Commerce Towers, and both One & Two Shell Plaza.

In addition, tunnel visitors enjoy the garage's convenient access to the McKinney underground tunnel, which connects to the Lamar Tunnel and Tunnel Loop. This part of the tunnel features an array of delicious dishes. From Mexican dishes at Rico Mexican Food to Cajun cuisine at Ragin Cajun, you can get a burrito or boudin all in the same area.

The McKinney Place garage offers

amenities that sets it apart from nearby parking facilities. An obvious amenity to tunnel travelers is the Information Center. This booth headed by Cathy Evans is loaded with tunnel maps, parking coupons, and reward and discount programs that earn parkers at the garage gift certificates up to \$25 to restaurants and retail stores in the tunnel.

Tunnel travelers and downtown workers park in the garage for more reasons than the obvious. One parker mentioned that he *chooses* to park at this garage, even though there is another garage closer to his office. "I park at this parking garage because the spaces are roomy and the ceilings are high enough for my truck. The employees are friendly as well."

Some tunnel visitors mentioned that they too park at this garage regardless of the

distance to their office because it makes their daily trip to the office more convenient. One visitor commented, "I value having the convenience of grabbing a fresh cup of coffee and newspaper without having to worry about any inclement weather conditions or busy street crossings."



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