

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

NEWS

AREA RESIDENTS SEE STARS-AND STRIPES-AT DAWN

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The flag elves have struck again this year in St. Louis neighborhoods.

Thousands of residents awoke Friday to find 17-by-11-inch American flags waving in their front yards.

"I was up at about 6:30 a.m. and the flag was already in the ground," said Mary Jones of the 700 block of Briarfarm Lane. She called the flags a lovely idea, and said that real estate agents for Coldwell-Banker/Ira E. Berry should give themselves credit for leaving them.

Because it's "wonderful to be patriotic," hundreds of agents arose before dawn to stick about 60,000 miniature flags in the yards of thousands of residents in this area, said Sue Marcus, vice president of marketing for the company.

"We do it as a community-service project," Marcus said. "We consider it an exciting event that everyone can participate in."

Marcus said the agents delivered the flags early in the morning because the company had got so many letters from people saying the flags were a wonderful surprise to wake up to. This is the third year the company has surprised residents with the patriotic symbols.

"It's a wonderful sensation for people to go out for their morning paper and see the flags," Marcus said. "We even got letters from people saying tears came to their eyes when they saw them."

The 60,000 flags were delivered by agents from the company's 29 area offices, including those in St. Charles and Belleville. For example, about 3,500 flags were delivered by 30 agents at the Manchester office of Ira E. Berry, said Pat Hutton, office manager. She said that most agents left the office at 5:30 a.m., but that some went out at 2 a.m. to make sure they stuck their share of flags in yards.

"We saw a number of joggers and people getting ready for work," Hutton said. She added that the flags were delivered in part because July 4 was a nice day to celebrate the opportunity of owning a house.

Eileen Coshier, an agent at the De Peres office, said her two-person team had delivered more than 200 flags.

Coshier said of delivering the flags, "It makes you patriotic."

Sue Beckett of the 700 block of Labonne Parkway said she hoped the flags a great idea, but complained that hers was stolen last year before the Fourth. She said she hoped they stay put during the holiday.

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