

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

May 31, 2022

Message from the Manager:

Memorial Day directed our prayers, thoughts, and memories to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our great Nation. The City of Harker Heights sprang to life a bit after Camp Hood received official Fort status. The history of Harker Heights is filled with countless stories of the brave service men and women who called this City home. All you need do is visit some of the people at our local veterans' groups or civic clubs to be wowed by the heroism that surrounds us in Harker Heights. Some brave servicemembers, Heights citizens, departed our City to some foreign soil where they gave their lives for our Country. I would be remised if I didn't mention that our City is filled with the families of those same servicemembers and they too have sacrificed so much for our Country. I have always said to those that might not know of Harker Heights that it is the "home of heroes." To those that gave all to our Country – thank you for your bravery and for your sacrifice so that others may continue to enjoy freedom.

I never served in the Armed Forces. For me, I can only imagine the stresses service members and their families face. Yet, even in the face of those stresses active members and veterans give of themselves in our community by serving as council members, board members, commissioners, various veterans support groups, civic club leaders, Scout Masters, baseball coaches, community volunteers – just to name a few. In fact, I've found that service members and veterans are some of the most active people in our community. Perhaps, given their service to our Country, they don't take for granted the freedoms we all enjoy.

Memorial Day is always a reset and refocus point for me. It reminds me of the reason we desire to serve at exceptional levels. Our service members have written and continue to write a narrative of love for Country. Here is the beautiful part to me (and what absolutely excites me about serving in Harker Heights), you and I get to a part of their story. How do we do that? We do that every day through our service! Keeping the home front safe for family members allows service members to defend our Country with fewer worries back home. Our emergency services teams provide highly trained and motivated first responders with the tools needed to protect families. Quality roads, water, sewer, and storm drainage ensure that families have safe infrastructure to depend on. Parks and Library services often provide that mental or recreational escape for military families, especially when their loved one is forward deployed or away training. It is our deepest desire that we give comfort in some way to our service members and their families.

In many ways, the story of our service members is woven with our own through our service to them and their families. I am thankful to serve on a team that is moved and motivated by the great sacrifices of our service members and their families. May we continue to serve them well and in so doing do our part to help protect the freedoms of our great Nation.

David

"The patriot's blood is the seed of freedom's tree." – **Thomas Campbell**

"All Gave Some, Some Gave All
Some stood through for the red, white and blue
And some had to fall

And if you ever think of me

Think of all your liberties and recall

Some Gave All” – Song “Some Gave All” written by Billy Ray Cyrus and Cindy Cyrus

General Updates:

Congratulations to Recent Promotions:

Water Service Worker Nathaniel Kolodjay promoted to the position of Crew Leader on May 14th

Welcome to Our New Hires:

James Hoffman hired as Part Time Recreation Aide on May 2nd

Billy Stevens hired as Light Equipment Operator in Parks on May 2nd

Quinton Amerson hired as Light Equipment Operator in Parks on May 2nd

Louis Hill hired as Part Time Telecommunicator on May 4th

Nathan Vilchez hired as Maintenance Technician in Wastewater on May 4th

Dale Reeves hired as Light Equipment Operator in Streets on May 9th

Arissa Erickson hired as Aquatics Cashier on May 10th

Peyton Brazzil hired as Lifeguard on May 10th

Luz Barreto Gonzalez hired as Lifeguard on May 10th

Nathan Cassidy hired as Lifeguard on May 10th

Anna Lajarin Rivero hired as Lifeguard on May 10th

Douglas Sauer hired as Aquatics Supervisor on May 20th

Patrick McKenna hired as Part Time Recreation Aide on May 23rd

Jaime Davalos hired as Water Service Worker on May 23rd

Sean Murphy hired as Maintenance Technician in Wastewater on May 24th

Fitness Challenge: HR announces a new Fitness Challenge for the month of June! During this challenge you will track your exercise (walking, biking, running, mowing the grass and even chores!) minutes. The challenge playfully calls us to cruise along a route from Chicago to Los Angeles where every minute of activity is equal to one mile along the route! Rewards include wearing jeans from July 5 to 7th or an extra paid 30 minutes for lunch. More information will be coming out via email from HR including a Fitness Challenge log!

New Notification System: The City has a new citizen notification system – GovDelivery. The new system was launched on May 6 and allows us to efficiently share news, action alerts, event notices and updates in a timely fashion. They can be delivered via email or by texts. To sign up, simply visit our webpage: www.harkerheights.gov.

Farmers Market: The Harker Heights Farmers Market is back! Come out to the City Hall parking lot for fresh vegetables, crafts and much, much more! The Market is every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Memorial Ceremony and Remembrance Walk 2022: The City held a Memorial Day Ceremony and Remembrance Walk on Saturday, May 28. The event featured a traditional wreath laying to honor those who gave their lives and a Remembrance Walk around Carl Levin Park.

Cops and Kids in the Park: Community Services will be hosting the annual Cops and Kids in the Park event at Kern Park on June 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Free Fishing Day: Don't have a fishing license? No problem June 4 is Free Fishing Day in the State of Texas. Join the GO Heights program from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Carl Levin Pond to try your hand at fishing!

Spotlight on Service:

Code Enforcement Thanked: Code Enforcement Officers Calving Fleming and Gabby Palma were thanked by citizens for their help and hard work.

Firefighter/Paramedics Gandara, Kiefer, Rochford, Sparkman and Truitt Provide Care: Firefighter/Paramedics Gandara, Kiefer, Rochford, Sparkman and Truitt were thanked by a citizen for their care of another family member. The citizen said they were grateful for the responders' care.

Angel Rodriguez is Parks and Rec Employee of the Month: Congrats Angel Rodriguez who was honored by his coworkers as the April Parks and Rec Employee of the Month.

Firefighter/Paramedics Keifer and Corey Show Teamwork: A paramedic from another agency called to let us know his kudos for Firefighter/Paramedics Stuart Kiefer and David Corey. They assisted in an EMS call in the County and the paramedic relayed that they were professional and responsive and had good teamwork.

Kelsey Coffman Assists HR: HR Director Leona Clay recently thanked Kelsey Coffman for her assistance in getting an RFP advertised. Ms. Clay stated that "you and your team are greatly appreciated."

Aaliyah Smith Appreciated: A citizen called to let us know how much she appreciated the Library and particularly Aaliyah Smith who was so kind and patient with her on the phone when she called late one evening.

Destinee Barton Gives of Her Time: Healthy Homes' Destinee Barton was thanked by a parent liaison from Mountainview for her participation in a Parent Resource Fair. Destinee "took the time to stay and visit with families" which meant a lot to the liaison.

Nate Nesbit Goes Above and Beyond: A citizen called to thank Nate Nesbit for his helpfulness and for always being nice.

Sgt. Cuthbert's Excellent Interaction: A citizen called to state that he had a wonderful interaction with Sgt. Eugene Cuthbert. Sgt. Cuthbert took the time to answer all the questions that the citizen's child had for him. He stated, although he got a ticket, Sgt. Cuthbert was extremely professional and nice.

TML Appreciates Adam Trujillo and Sara Gibbs: TML held a program in the City with help from the Activities Center. TML stated that "the program was probably one of the best that we have had. The assistance provided by Adam with the facility was great. And Sara Gibbs, who was in the program, helped me out so much. I cannot brag on her enough."

Finance's Utility Staff Complimented: Two customers recently compliment Finance's Utility Staff as being "fantastic."

Officer Justin Smith Gives Joy: We received a Facebook message of appreciation for Officer Justin Smith. The citizen thanked Officer Smith for a ride along for her children. The citizen stated, “Officer Smith was amazing and my Boys will be talking about it forever!!”

Heights EMS Thanked in Newspaper: A citizen was published in the KDH editorial section thanking our EMS. The citizen stated “I want to thank Harker Heights EMS for taking me to the emergency room on May 2 and having someone come and stay with my wife until our daughter came to be with her. This is above and beyond.” G. Berg – Harker Heights

Melonie Matthewson Makes Connections: Melonie Matthewson was thanked for connecting a citizen’s daughter to the Teen Court.

Chuck Adams Provides Expertise: Public Works’ Chuck Adams assisted a citizen with a question they had on drainage on their lot. The citizen wrote that “Chuck is a credit to the Harker Heights city staff.”