

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

November 30, 2022

Message from the Manager:

Thanksgiving ushers in the full holiday season and has always had a special place in my heart! Memories of time spent with my family and friends enjoying food, games, conversation and more. Precious memories that I will always treasure. I hope you too have treasured memories of this season! Plus, what other time of the year do I get to use the word “cornucopia”? (*webster defines it as an inexhaustible store or abundance to which I always think of the culinary treats of Thanksgiving such as turkey, ham, potatoes, green bean casserole, myriad of pies and the list goes on and on and on... but alas I digest.*)

Thanksgiving reminds us all to reflect on the many things we are thankful for! In our fast paced, social media, Tiktok, snappy-chat, 24-hour news cycle world, that too many times promotes divisiveness, it is easy to lose our mindfulness of the many blessings we have in our lives. Think about all you are thankful for – family, friends, pets, hobbies, vehicle, food, shelter to name a few. Being thankful has a grounding effect in our lives – it takes our eyes from the troubles of this world, most we can't individually fix anyway, and focuses our minds on the things that matter.

I encourage you to share with those who bless your life how thankful you are for them. Just like each of us, those in our lives are not immune to the pressures of this world. What a wonderful gift to give those that mean so much to us – the gift of an uplifting comment of just what they mean to us!

I'm thankful for each of you. I'm thankful for the tremendous service you provide for our citizens. I'm thankful for the positive attitude you bring to an often thankless job. I'm thankful for the support I see you give each other. I'm thankful for the innovations you bring forward on our quest to serve better tomorrow than today. You all are a blessing to our citizens, and I am so thankful for all you do.

I can't close my message without adding my thankfulness for our City Council. Harker Heights has been blessed with Council Members who put the needs of citizens and the betterment of the City first and foremost in their decision making. Our current Council is no exception. They care deeply for this City and that is evident in the actions they take as a Council. Sometimes the easiest pathways are not the right ones and I am thankful to serve a Council that is always willing to do the right thing because it is what is best for the City. To our City Council, thank you from a grateful City Manager.

I'm proud to be on this journey of service with you all!

David

"Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses." - **Alphonse Karr**

“The heart that gives thanks is a happy one, for we cannot feel thankful and unhappy at the same time.” – Douglas Wood

General Updates:

Promotions:

We celebrate those recently promoted:

James Hoffman promoted to Police Telecommunicator on November 26th.

Matthew Hogan promoted to Fire Battalion Chief on November 26th.

Damon Sprouse promoted to Fire Lieutenant on November 26th.

Eric Jackson promoted to Heavy Equipment Operator on November 26th.

New Hires:

Welcome to all our new hires:

Brandon Casto hired for the position of Parks Light Equipment Operator on November 15th.

Accomplishments:

Ursula Paddie earns Municipal Courts Level II Exam All Parts Certification

Catharina Hoffman received the “Rising Star” award at the Vision XXI Leadership Class.

Chief Betiale Hawkins graduated from the Vision XXI Leadership Class.

Ursula Paddie graduated from the Vision XXI Leadership Class.

Wilson Owens obtained his Registered Code Enforcement Officer License.

Courtney Fye received her Residential Building Inspector certification.

Courtney Fye received her Residential Plans Examiner certification.

Christmas Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony: The City’s Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be Thursday, December 1, starting at 6 p.m. Come out and enjoy this small-town splendor type event!

Frost Fest: Frost Fest will be at the Community Park from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m on Friday, December 9.

Howdy Holidays: On Saturday, December 10, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Park the City will hold Howdy Holidays. The event will include many of our local vendors for those special and unique holiday gifts!

“Chilly” Cook Off: You can sign up now for the “Chilly” Cook Off. The event will occur alongside Howdy Holidays on December 10, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Park. Please contact Harker Heights Activities Center Staff at atrujillo@harkerheights.gov with any questions.

Wreath Decorating Contest: Try your luck in the Harker Heights Wreath Decorating Contest! For an entry form, click here <https://bit.ly/harkerheightsevents>. The theme for this year's contest is

"Texas". Wreaths and entry forms must be submitted to the Harker Heights Activities Center by Monday, Dec. 12 at 5:00 pm where they will be placed on display. Special guest judging will be held from Dec. 13-16 and winners will be announced on the Parks and Recreation Facebook page on Dec. 19. For more information please reach out to sgibbs@harkerheights.gov or call 254-953-5493.

Holiday Decorating Contest: Decorating your home or business for the holiday season? Register and compete in the Holiday Decorating Contest! Click here for an entry form <https://bit.ly/harkerheightsevents>. Homes and businesses within Harker Height can enter for a chance to win. FREE to enter. Fill out a registration form or pick up a copy at the Activities Center (400 Indian Trail) or at the Recreation Center (307 Miller's Crossing). Submit completed form by Monday, December 12 to sgibbs@harkerheights.gov or in person to the Activities Center. Judging will be held on December 14-16, and winners will be announced on December 19 on the Harker Heights Parks and Recreation Facebook page.

Polar Express Family Storytime at the Library: Thursday December 15th at the Library (Children's Department) from 6 to 7:30 p.m. there will be a special Polar Express program. The Library is seeking volunteers to assist with the program. For more information please contact Lisa Youngblood Lyoungblood@harkerheights.gov.

Kids Fish: On Friday, December 16 at Carl Levin Park Pond there will be a Kids Fish Event! Time of the event is 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Volunteers to assist with this event are sought. For more information contact Jeff Achee Jachee@harkerheights.gov.

Council Repeals Prop A Ordinance: Recently, a citizen petition concerning the enforcement of misdemeanor laws related to marijuana possession was placed before the voters and approved with 64 percent of the vote. Unfortunately, the ordinance is inconsistent with State law and as such is void. Among other things the ordinance removed the smell of marijuana as probable cause and called for discipline of officers who enforced these laws. Council at their November 22 meeting repealed the ordinance in its entirety. While the majority of residents who cast votes in this election approved of the ordinance, that does not change the fact it is inconsistent with State law.

City Awarded Hiring Vets Medallion: The US Department of Labor awarded the City with the 2022 Hire Vets Medallion Award! This is a major recognition from the Federal level of the efforts to hire veterans by the City. Great work by our HR staff for having the efforts of the City recognized!

Municipal Court Gets the Spotlight: Our Municipal Court was recognized in the October 2022 TML Risk Pool report for their traffic safety efforts and the corresponding Traffic Safety Award that the Municipal Court received. Great job from the entire Municipal Court team!

Spotlight on Service:

Kelsey Coffman Thanked: Finance's Kelsey Coffman was thanked by Planning Director Kristina Ramirez for her efforts in providing the logistics for the City Hall carpet replacement. Director Ramirez wrote "you are doing a great job corralling us all to get this accomplished with the least amount of disruption as possible to our customers."

Eric Alton Gets it Done: A citizen wrote to thank Public Works' Eric Alton for his work street sweeping. The citizen stated, "walking will be much easier" and that Eric was "working hard."

Nick Olson, Roman Hernandez and Alyssa Scwhindt Provide Life Saving Care: A citizen's family wrote a touching letter to express their appreciation for the actions of Fire Fighters Nick Olson, Roman Hernandez and Alyssa Scwhindt. The Fire Fighters swift response and actions helped save the life of their grandfather. Key statements from the letter include "attentive care", "quick actions", "heros", and "swift response." Great job by all!

John Fox and Rick Alton Get Noticed: A citizen wrote to thank Public Works' John Fox and Rick Alton for their efforts to clean up graffiti. The citizen wrote, "it's people like these two gentlemen that keep our City looking nice for its citizens and visitors."

Patrick Wilson Shows Professionalism: A citizen wrote to compliment Public Works' Patrick Wilson. The citizen stated they were "so impressed with Patrick's professionalism and was grateful for how sensitive he was."

Lisa Youngblood Assists Beyond Library: Library Director Lisa Youngblood used the Library's social media to assist Municipal Courts in getting the word out on Municipal Courts Week. HR Director Leona Clay thanked Lisa for her assistance in helping getting the word out.

PD Appreciated: A citizen wrote to thank the PD's evening crew for spending time with their family on a recent visit. The citizens wrote "here's an attaboy and attagirl to all of the family in blue."

Joshua Ramirez-Figueroa Assists: Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiie thanked HR's Joshua Ramirez-Figueroa for the assistance he provided for getting their old files stored away and taking care of the "old" paperwork that was found. Ayesha wrote, "Although it may have seemed like it was a small task, it made a big difference to my staff and I."

Lyndsey Amundson Recognized: Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiie thanked HR's Lyndsey Amundson for assisting with their Care Bear Crew. Ayesha wrote, "we appreciate you!"

Roxanne Harrill Provides Excellence: PD's Lieutenant Roxanne Harrill was thanked by a citizen. The citizen "greatly appreciated the time and effort.." and Roxanne's "positive attitude." The citizen stated, "Lieutenant Harrill is the personification of "Police Excellence"."

Michael Licavoli and Hunter Ringo Give Care: A citizen came in to thank Fire Fighters Michael Licavoli and Hunter Ringo for care they gave her husband. She brought them a thank you card and some brownies!

Andrea Contreras and Courts Feed the Organization: Courts' Andrea Contreras and the Courts staff held a thanksgiving meal for City Hall staff. Assistant City Manager Jerry Bark wrote to say it was a wonderful meal and thanked Andrea and the entire Courts staff for the meal.