

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

October 28, 2022

Message from the Manager:

Do you remember painting by numbers as a kid? A sheet full of connected polygons that each contained a number associated with a color in a key that was given for the painting. Sometimes the puzzles were so simple that you could make out the end picture that would result from the painting. Sometimes they were more complex, and it took a bit for the picture to come into view. I can tell you that paint by numbers is as close as I ever got to being an artist! Companies now offer color by number for adults that contain very advanced swirls of polygons that take a great deal of time and painstaking effort but result in beautiful paintings. It is said that this style of painting is a great stress reducer as well!

So why tell you about my Rembrandt years using paint by numbers? Because, it is a perfect illustration of how our City operates. In this analogy, each department has an associated number and color they provide to the painting. Most of our departments do tasks that are mutually exclusive. Parks addresses parks, Police handles law enforcement, Fire handles fire and EMS, and so on. While we do assist each other across departments as needed and requested, most of what we do is within the purview of the responsibilities that we have within our individual departments. In many ways we are very similar to painting by numbers. By each department providing quality services we fill the painting of our City resulting in a beautiful portrait of service. Without the right mix of services our painting results in a City that is less desirable for resident and business attraction and retention.

I know that portrait of service can be hard to see. Each of us is busy performing the tasks that are our responsibility every day. We don't often get to share our good work or hear of the good work going on across departments. It's like we are so close to our own polygon we are coloring that we can't see the entire picture. One of the advantages that I have is from my seat I get to see the colors all come together of all your good work and the great City it builds. You may be unaware of the total impact you are making in the lives of others, but rest assured, together, you are making a difference and in a big way! You keep Harker Heights as the City of choice for many citizens and businesses through your service. It takes all our departments, as diverse in service as they all are, to create a portrait that honors those that chose Harker Heights for their home or business.

I am very proud of you all. Daily I get to hear of the differences you are making in the lives of others. Your passion and hard work continue a legacy of service that our City is known for. Our service is how we grow ourselves individually. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it this way, "Everyone can be great, because everybody can serve." Let's collectively continue to do our jobs so well that the portraits of service we paint are an inspiration to all!

David

"As we lose ourselves in the service of others we discover our own lives and our own happiness." – Dieter F. Uchtdorf

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” – Desmond Tutu

General Updates:

Promotions:

We celebrate those recently promoted:

Catharina Hoffman promoted to the position of Court Administrator on October 1st
Andrea Contreras promoted to the position of Clerk of the Court on October 1st
David “Alex” McCoy promoted to the position of Code Enforcement Officer on October 1st
Justin Elliott promoted to the position of Driver/Pump Operator on October 1st
Stephanie Hall promoted to the position of Executive Assistant on October 1st
Billy Stevens promoted to the position of Crew Leader on October 1st
Aaliyah Smith promoted to the position of Full Time Library Clerk on October 15th
Justin Lewis promoted to the position of Lieutenant on October 15th
Eve Vazquez promoted to the position of Utility Billing Clerk on October 31st
Michelle Smart promoted to the position of Account Clerk on October 31st
Stuart Kiefer promoted to Driver/Pump Operator on October 29th

Transfers:

Recent employees who have transferred positions:

Annette Hamman transferred to the position of Customer Service Clerk on October 1st
Lyndsey Amundson transferred to the position of Human Resources Specialist on October 17th
Bridgette Chihuahua-Franco transferred to the position of Part Time Library clerk on October 29th
Clyde Hicks transferred to the position of Building Security Officer on October 29th

New Hires:

Welcome to all our new hires:

Tamara Williams hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on October 3rd
Patrick Morris was hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on October 13th
William Delin was hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on October 13th
Roman Hernandez was hired for the position of Firefighter/Paramedic on October 24th
Ernesto Rodarte was hired for the position of Firefighter/EMT on October 24th

Retirements:

We wish our recent retirees all the best:

Sgt. Eugene Cuthbert retired on October 21st after 11 years of service to the City.
Brandon “Cody” Newman, Driver/Pump Operator, retired on October 27th after 18 years of service to the City.

Accomplishments:

Congratulations to those with accomplishments this month:

Catharina Hoffman obtains Level II Clerk certification

Kudos Celebration: This past month's "kudos celebration" honored none other than HR's Melonie Matthewson! Melonie brings cheer with her every day. She is approachable to all and genuinely cares for all our employees. Melonie has for me always been an example of how one can renew their spirit every day! Congrats on the award Melonie and thank you for all you do for us all!

Dedication Ceremony: On Friday, October 28, the Library held a special dedication ceremony for the Bob and Sue Dunlap Serenity Garden and the Stew and Mari Meyer Story Walk. Both families have given so much to our City over so many years. The Serenity Garden and Story Walk will be another of the lasting impacts these families have had on the City.

"Planksgiving" Challenge: Don't miss out on November's fitness challenge Planksgiving! And while a Frankenstein like word it's exactly what you might think – Planksgiving is a plank challenge in the month of Thanksgiving! To sign up please see Human Resources Specialist Lyndsey Amundson.

Haunted Heights: Bring your family to the spook-tacular Haunted Heights! This event will be held on Saturday, October 29 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Carl Levin Park. Activities include family-fun activities, games, vendors, and more. Be sure to wear your costume to go trick-or-treating!

I Love My Parks Day: The I Love My Parks Day and Kern Community Garden Grand opening will be Saturday, November 5 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Kern Community Garden. There will be planting of trees for Texas Arbor Day, installing a Free Seed Library and Free Book Library.

Trick or Treat Hours: Door-to-door Trick or Treat Hours are from 6 to 8 p.m. on Monday, October 31. Be on the lookout for little ones that are out and about gathering treats!

Farmers Market: This will be the last weekend to enjoy the Farmers Market for 2022. Come on by City Hall from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a special edition of the Market with trick or treating and door prize giveaway!

Go Heights Coming Events: On Wednesday, November 9 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. enjoy a hike at Dana Peak Park. On Saturday, November 12 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. enjoy Introduction to Birding at Purser Park. Reservation for the events is required.

Blue Santa Program: PD's Community Services Division is collecting money donations and new bike donations. This year's goal is to donate at least 60 bicycles to KISD students in Harker Heights.

Spotlight on Service:

PD's Sworn Employee of the Quarter: Congratulations to Sergeant Michael O'Hala who was selected as the Police Department's Sworn Employee of the Quarter.

PD's Civilian Employee of the Quarter: Congratulations to Desiraye Torres who was selected as the Police Department's Civilian Employee of the Quarter.

Nate Nesbitt Thanked: Public Works' Nate Nesbitt received a comment online from a citizen who said they had a "thankful heart to Nate...for his wisdom, spirit and hospitality...He is our hero...strong in body and spirit!"

Officer Clyde Hicks Complimented: A citizen called to compliment Officer Clyde Hicks for his professionalism. He stated that Officer Hicks was pleasant and did not make him nervous in anyway.

Damon Sprouse Gives Special Remembrance: Firefighter Damon Sprouse created a shadowbox for the family of our fallen Firefighter Cole Simmons. The special remembrance gift was covered in the following media link: <https://cw39.com/news/texas/harker-heights-fire-department-creates-shadowbox-for-fallen-comrade/>.

Officer Nicholas Simmons Gives Aid: Officer Nicholas Simmons was thanked by a citizen for rendering aid to her child. The citizen stated, "Thank you Officer Simmons for all you do. We appreciate you!"

Municipal Court is Exceptional: A citizen wrote to thank the Municipal Court for being so easy to work with. The citizen stated, "Your system and staff are exceptional."

HR is Amazing: Park's Byrale Carter thanked HR for their assistance with officials and said, "You're amazing! Thank you!!!"

Sgt. Eugene Cuthbert Saves a Headache: A citizen wrote to thank Sgt. Eugene Cuthbert. The citizen stated that Sgt. Cuthbert had, "Saved me a big headache and was a great help!"

FD Gets Recognition: FD received several drawings and colored sheets recognizing their emergency efforts from students at Mountainview Elementary School.

Christina Link Cares for Others: Library's Christina Link was praised by a citizen for her assistance with his resume and job search. He stated that when he does get a job, he knows that it will be because of the help Christina gave him. He was amazed by concern she showed for someone who was just visiting the Library in need of help.

Library and Parks and Rec Make Memories: The Library and Parks and Rec were praised by a citizen online for their joint efforts in the Zombie Hunt program. The citizen said the event was "awesome" and, "We had so much fun. It was run so smoothly. All the work & fantastic volunteers made it truly a one of a kind memory for my crew!"

Judge Billy Ray Hall Impresses: Judge Billy Ray Hall recently presented at Belton's New Tech, Killeen High and Chaparral High to students and made a very favorable impression. While the news got it a little wrong calling Judge Hall a Bell County Judge – we all know him as our fine Harker Heights Municipal Court Judge and we are proud of all his efforts representing our great City!

Gary Bates Assists: IT Director Gary Bates assisted HR Director Leona Clay in gathering items for the City's kudo gift box while at TML. HR Director Clay wrote to thank Gary for his assistance.

Ursula Paddie and Julie Helsham Do a Fantastic Job: Parks Director Jeff Achee wrote to thank the City Secretary Office's Ursula Paddie and Julie Helsham for the new City Manager's Report design that "looks fantastic! Great job!"

Jeff Achee Gives Outstanding Support: Mr. John Odom wrote to express his appreciation for Parks Director Jeff Achee's assistance with the Medicine Man event at the City's Comanche Gap property.