

Message from the Manager:

Happy New Year and welcome to 2026! Have you ever had one of those days... I recently read a social media post of someone who had a flat tire and said something about how 2026 was going to just be that kind of year! Now we can smile when we read that, but how many of us let external forces rule us? 2026 would be great, if not for my family, my job, my neighbors, my house, my car... and the list goes on and on. We make things into a self-fulfilling prophecy and in so doing make ourselves a victim by our own thought processes.

2026 will be our best year yet! How dare I act like I have some special foretelling! I mean I've watched Back to the Future, but I've never ridden in a DeLorean! So how can I be so confident in 2026? It's simple, we control it! Simply put, we control how we think and how we react to all situations in our life. We control our direction – remember those New Years' resolutions of a better you? We control the goals and the steps we take to achieve them. Want 2026 to be your best year yet? You control it! One of life's most liberating lessons – you control your attitude to what you encounter in life no matter what it is you face!

So what's holding you back? No matter what you think the answer or answers to that question are, it starts with you. We are so lucky to have individuals in our organization that demonstrate that daily! I think of our co-workers such as Melonie Matthewson, Stephanie Hall, Betiale Hawkins, Angie Sabino, Casey Brazzil, Jake Greenwood, Nate Nesbit, Chuck Adams, Catharina Hoffman, Christian Batista, Ray Gandara and Rose Ramon (just to name a few). Did you know that they face struggles and roadblocks in their own lives? Life spares none of us challenges. What these individuals understand is they control their response to those events! That's a big reason we all enjoy visiting with them. They are a ray of sunshine. They understand that joy in life starts in our very thought patterns! In the early 90's Gatorade ran an ad entitled "Be Like Mike" with the great NBA star Michael Jordan. Their ad fits here – if the principle seems difficult to grasp, "Be Like Mike", simply be like the stars we have around us!

2026 can be your best year yet, it's up to you! I've already won by getting to be on this journey of service with you all!

David

“Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.” —Henry Ford

“If you want something you’ve never had, you must be willing to do something you’ve never done.” —Thomas Jefferson

General Updates

Welcome to our new hires:

Fiona Williams hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on January 5th

Ryanne Martinez hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on January 5th

Jackson Allen hired for the position of Firefighter/Paramedic on January 5th

Matthew Knight hired for the position of Water Service Worker on January 12th

Corey Johnson hired for the position of Wastewater Maintenance Technician on January 12th

Congratulations to those receiving a promotion:

Samirah Williams promoted to Deputy Court Clerk on January 17th

Stuart Kiefer promoted to Captain on January 31st

Accomplishments:

William (Jake) Greenwood received the 2025 Police Officer of the Year Award

Isaac Perez received the 2025 Firefighter of the Year Award

Library received the 2025 Achievement of Excellence Award

Dale Reeves achieved the C Water License

January Kudos Award Winners: Congratulations to Calvin Fleming, Alex McCoy, and Henry Nash as our January kudos winners! Wow, what great work you all do, and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

Clyde's Crossword Challenge: This month's Clyde's Crossword Challenge winners were 1st Place – Sherill Carillo, 2nd Place – Leona Clay and 3rd Place Lorissa Byse.

Sudoku Winner: This month's winner of the Sudoku Challenge was Park's Nicole Loayza!

12 Days of Christmas Challenge: The winners of the 12 Days of Christmas were 1st Place – Melonie Matthewson, 2nd Place – Clyde Hicks, and 3rd Place – Erica Rossmiller. We even had one citizen winner – Ms. Karen Martin! Congrats to all!

HH-N-GO: A new HH-N-GO bingo challenge began with the start of 2026! A new letter/number will be pulled each week and there are specific things to do for that letter/number if you have it on your card. There is a game card for employees and one for citizens. The game helps us to get to know our organization better and for our citizens it helps them get to know the City better. Contact HR for your bingo card! So far I have not gotten one number pulled in 2026, maybe your card is the winner! It's never too late to get a card and play!

New Beginnings Shared Vision January Challenge: The New Beginnings Shared Vision Challenge will inspire us in January. The challenge will end Saturday, January 31.

Aquatic Summer Staff Needed: Parks is hiring for summer aquatics staff: lifeguards, cashiers and water safety instructors. Know of someone who would enjoy a temporary summer job please refer them to Parks.

Harker Heights Arts & Music Festival: This year the City is combining the First Friday Music Series with the Harker Heights Arts Festival! Friday, April 3, come out to hear the Purple Hulls from 6 to 8 p.m. and also get to visit with the Harker Heights Arts Commission and various vendors. Food trucks will be available and please bring a chair or blanket to best enjoy the concert! On Saturday, April 4, from 12 p.m to 4 p.m. the fun continues with the Arts Festival!

Spotlight on Service:

Bianca Ceja Cebreros, Rebekah Scottini, Ethan Quigley, Joshua Hidalgo, Roger Lee France, Roxanne Harrill, Cory Bates, Sara Brockman, Dennis McAfee, Louis Hill, Bambi Basinger, Andrew Barnstable, Dustin Weaver, Alexis Jorgensen, Matthew Enos, Massoud Howayeck, Jose Villacorta, Michelle Fowler, Brenda Hilton, Joseph Varley, Ethan Ogas, Jared Tipton, Jeffery Jordan, Joseph Bankhead and Jayla Tyner

Thanked: Police Chief Sonja Clay wrote to thank Bianca Ceja Cebreros, Rebekah Scottini, Ethan Quigley, Joshua Hidalgo, Roger France, Roxanne Harrill, Cory Bates, Sara Brockman, Dennis McAfee, Louis Hill, Bambi Basinger, Andrew Barnstable, Dustin Weaver, Alexis Jorgensen, Matthew Enos, Massoud Howayeck, Jose Villacorta, Michelle Fowler, Brenda Hilton, Joseph Varley, Ethan Ogas, Jared Tipton, Jeffery Jordan, Joseph Bankhead and Jayla Tyner for their recent work during the winter storm. These team members braved the elements to assist coworkers and citizens alike during the winter storm and they, per Chief Clay's words, "*did not shy away from their duties of serving our community.*"

Harry Sheppard and the Water Department Recognized: A citizen called the City to praise Public Work's Harry Sheppard and the entire Water Department. The citizen was super impressed as they tended to a water outage at her location and got everything restored in a short amount of time. She said everyone she talked to was super professional and courteous. She also stated she was very impressed with the Public Works Dept. and the communication and follow-up that we provide to our customers.

Burl Lewis, Mark Hyde, Chuck Adams, John McElroy, Jonathan Hicks, Patrick Wilson, Kristina Ramirez and Todd Maxon Praised: Burl Lewis, Mark Hyde, Chuck Adams, John McElroy, Jonathan Hicks, Patrick Wilson, Kristina Ramirez and Todd Maxon were recently

praised by City Manager David Mitchell for their hard work on the City's stormwater system and records which led to a clean audit by TCEQ. David stated, *"Great work team! I know it takes daily effort to maintain us in a manner that achieves these results. That is a testament to the hard work that you all do!"*

Rose Ramon, Shiloh Wester and Staff Help: The Pet Adoption Center received a beautiful letter and update from an adopter. The adopter wrote, *"Rose, Shiloh and Staff, Thank you all for the work you do and for helping Yonder (previously Marcel) on his way to finding me! He was one of the feral hoarder chihuahuas that HHPAC took in around September 2022. He came to me as a stray on December 31, 2022, when a finder tried to surrender him to the Austin shelter, it was full, but I was there volunteering and took him home. Once I realized how feral he still was, I decided to keep him myself. He has since come a long way, traveling across the country with me and my other dog Rigby (who I adopted in Brooklyn) from coast to coast. He spends most days napping in the front window of my house and liberally using the dog door to patrol the yard. I think he is finally housetrained, three years in! Thank you for all the work you do, Julie, Rigby and Yonder"* She included a poem she wrote and so many amazing photos of the adventures they've been on. What a life Yonder has, we wish this for all of our shelter dogs!! Thank you to all the PAC staff who make a difference in the lives of each and every pet that comes through our program. Updates like this make it all worth it!!

Darlene Prechtel Appreciated: PD's Karry Fow wrote of her appreciation for PD's Darlene Prechtel. Karry stated, *"Darlene has been exceptional in her role as "Administrative Officer to the Chief"/"Instructor to the Executive Assistant"/"Instructor to the Records Clerk". It appears she does all of this work with ease. And while some individuals might appear stressed by these additional responsibilities, Darlene continues to smile, laugh, and find ways to accommodate my schedule. We are truly blessed to have such an outstanding employee."*

Roger Lee France and Bambi Basinger Go the Extra Mile: A citizen wrote on social media of their thanks for PSO Roger Lee France and Officer Bambi Basinger for assisting her getting her house keys and wallet after she mistakenly left them at a location during the winter storm. PSO France and Officer Basinger went the extra mile to assist her!

Angie Sabino Motivates: A citizen emailed to express her appreciation for the 12 Days of Christmas Challenge which was developed by Angie Sabino. The citizen stated, “This challenge was such a fun and motivating way to stay active during a busy holiday season. It gave me something positive to look forward to each day and helped me stay consistent, even when energy was low or schedules were hectic. Little by little, it kept me moving and reminded me that progress doesn’t have to be perfect to be meaningful.” Great job Angie!

Kristina Ramirez and Houston Johnson Win: Christine Luciano the Environmental Outreach Coordinator on Fort Hood wrote to express her thanks for Kristina Ramirez and Houston Johnson. Their work was “instrumental” in the winning of a Sustainability Practices Award from the Texas Chapter of American Public Works Association. Great work Kristina and Houston!