

Message from the Manager:

IT Director Gary Bates brings us this month's most excellent message:

Communication: The Core of Connection

In city government, communication is what keeps everything moving. Every project, service, and citizen interaction depends on our ability to clearly share information and work together. When communication is clear, things run smoothly. When it isn't, confusion, frustration, and unnecessary tension follow.

I learned early in my career that communication is more than words; it's precision and intent. During my time in the military, my job was to coordinate ground commanders' intent and objectives to Air Force pilots. Every transmission mattered. One unclear message could lead to serious consequences. It taught me that clarity and tone are just as important as content.

That same lesson applies in IT. Networks rely on clean, accurate communication between systems. When a connection drops or data gets scrambled, everything slows down — or stops entirely. The system doesn't fail because it doesn't care; it fails because the message didn't get through or is unclear to the receiving system.

The same is true for people. Miscommunication doesn't always happen in what we say, sometimes it's in *how* we say it. A sharp tone, an impatient email, or talking behind someone's back creates disconnects that ripple across teams. Over time, those small breakdowns build frustration and chip away at trust.

Clear, respectful communication builds strong teams. It means pausing before reacting, assuming positive intent, and choosing words that solve problems instead of creating new ones. So, this month, take time to check your signal. Be intentional in how you communicate, whether in person, by phone, or by email. Every message you send shapes the strength of our organization and our ability to serve the community effectively.

"Gentlemen, the officer who doesn't know his communications and supply as well as his tactics is totally useless." - **General George S. Patton**

"The Web does not just connect machines, it connects people." - **Tim Berners-Lee**

General Updates:

Retirements:

Library Director Lisa Youngblood is retiring at the end of November after a storied career with the City. Lisa brought a consistent passion for programming that was based on what the public desired from their Library. Under her leadership the Library became a model for other libraries across the State. We wish Lisa all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

New Hires:

John McElroy -Public Works Director on October 1st

Christopher O'Reilly – Firefighter/EMT on October 15th

Alexander David – Paramedic on October 27th

Elexus Zaragoza – Utility Billing Clerk on October 30th

Promotions:

Crystal Thomas promoted to Library Administrator on October 11th

Darlene Prechtel promoted to Administrative Officer to the Chief on October 11th

Kathleen Ann Mascarenas promoted to Police Lieutenant on October 25th

Bambi Basinger promoted to Police Sergeant on October 25th

Savannah Christopher promoted to Police Sergeant on October 25th

Transfers:

Andrea Contreras transferred to position of Permit Technician on October 25th

Accomplishments:

Kesley Coffman completed the New and Emerging Procurement Officers Program

October Kudos Award Winners: Congratulations to **Victoria Ellis and Kaily Funez-Lenon** who were our October Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do, and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge: This month's Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge winners were 1st Place – Leona Clay, 2nd Place – Gage Genthner and 3rd Place Sue Ellen Reynaga.

September Self Care Challenge: Our September Challenge was Self Care. The Challenge ran through October 3 and the winners were as follows: 1st Place – Rose Ramon, 2nd Place – Sabrina Jerrett, 3rd Place – Melonie Matthewson.

Pep in Your Step October Challenge: The challenge is running until November 4. Turn in your challenge log by November 5th to be entered into a prize drawing.

Carved and Decorated Pumpkin Contest: Winners of this year's contest were first place, Lorisa Byse and second place Catherina Hoffman.

HH-N-GO: A new HH-N-GO bingo challenge began with the start of 2025! 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! I'm hearing there have now been two winners so far – Fabian Brooks and Leona Clay! Is there for a prize for having the most hits on a card without a bingo?? If not, I want a refund on my card! Remember, you must complete all the activities on the card and take a picture of each task!

Harker Heights Farmers Market: The Harker Heights Farmers Market runs every Saturday until December 6 at City Hall.

Veterans Ceremony: The Veterans Ceremony will be held on November 5 from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Activities Center.

First Friday's Music Series: The next First Friday's Music Series will be in Carl Levin Park on November 7 from 7 to 9 p.m. The artist will be Glen Moley!

Council Cookies and Coco/Tree Lighting Event: This event will be on December 1 this year starting at 5:30 p.m. Come out and visit with Council and City departments and enjoy some holiday refreshments and kick off the Christmas season with our annual Tree Lighting Event!

Frost Fest: This year's Frost Fest will run from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Community Park.

Spotlight on Service:

Michael Beard and Betiale Hawkins Get it Done: Mayor Blomquist gave kudos to Michael Beard and Betiale Hawkins for making strides in getting 911 mapping errors corrected for the City. Mayor Blomquist heard praise for the efforts while at the CTCOG 911 District meeting and wanted to pass along his thanks.

Michelle Otero Thanked: A business owner called City Hall to express their gratitude for Michelle Otero's attentive customer service, and providing clear information on their business registration requirements.

Kristina Ramirez Supports: HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank City Engineer Kristina Ramirez. Leona wrote, "*I wanted to take a minute to thank you so much for checking in on*

me this week and for offering to get me lunch when things were really rough. Your care and support helped more than you know. Thanks for being there.”

Kaily Funez-Lenon Complimented: Dr. Joe Easley with KISD wrote to thank Court’s Kaily Funez-Lenon. Dr. Easley Wrote, *“Good morning all, I wanted to take a moment to compliment how incredible the presentation was given by Ms. Kaily Funez-Lenon. She has a high energy level and interacts exceptionally well with the teenagers. Her PPT presentation on DUI (Driving Under the Influence) was engaging, and the students were excited and truly enjoyed the experience. Thank you, Ms. Funez-Lenon, for your outstanding work!”*

EMS and PD Make a Difference: Councilmember Sam Halabi wanted to share his thanks to our EMS and PD. Councilmember Halabi stated our EMS and PD do an outstanding job and their services are a blessing. Specifically noted were PD’s Lt. Harrill, FD’s FF/PM Alyssa Schwindt, FF/EMT Vicente Fernandez, FF/PM Ernest Rodarte, FF/EMT Mason Heifner, Capt. Rene Fernandez, D/O John Fussell, and FF/PM Mike Licavoli.

Parks, PD, FD, and the City Recognized: Harker Heights Chamber President Rebecca Moon expressed her thanks to the City for our assistance with the Food, Wine and Brew Festival. Special thanks was given to Parks, PD, FD and City leaders.

Lisa Youngblood Gets Kudos: Councilmember Lynda Nash gave a special recognition to Library Director Lisa Youngblood at a recent Council meeting for her help with the Arts Commission.

PD and FD Risk All to Save Others: A citizen wrote to thank FD for their heroic efforts to save their mother-in-law who was in a house fire. The following FD personnel assisted in the life saving efforts: Anthony Combs, Ray Gandara, Justin Lewis, Nathan Elliott, Joshua Brown, Justin Read, Mark Mata, Vicente Fernandez, Logan Green, Luke Furness, Ethan McClellan, Isaac Perez, and Chris Mahlstedt. PD personnel who assisted: Savannah Christopher, Michelle Fowler, and Dennis McAfee.

Angie Sabino Wows: A recent job applicant at City Hall for an interview was wowed by HR's Angie Sabino. The applicant overheard Angie working to assist some citizens via phone. While the callers were upset, Angie dealt with them so professionally and was very helpful.

Kristina Ramirez is Exceptional: HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank City Engineer Kristina Ramirez. Leona wrote, "*I want to express my heartfelt thanks for Kristina Ramirez' exceptional work in helping us reach compliance with Title VI. Her expertise, commitment, and hard work allowed us to receive a green (satisfactory) status with the Texas Department of Transportation.*"

Kristina Ramirez and Houston Johnson are Helpful: A citizen wrote to express their thanks for City Engineer Kristiana Ramirez and Assistant to the City Manager Houston Johnson. The Citizen stated they, "*were incredibly helpful in explaining everything clearly and making sure I understood what to expect now and in the future. It's great to see that kind of care and communication from the team. I really appreciate your time and the way you and your staff go the extra mile to keep residents informed. It makes a big difference.*"

Kelsey Coffman Gets it Done: City Manager David Mitchell was very proud of Finance's Kelsey Coffman for her completion of the New and Emerging Procurement Officers' Program. David stated, "*Kelsey just continues to grow as a finance professional and I'm very proud of her efforts.*"

Remidios Duenas and Annette Hamman Are Helpful: A citizen shared with Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee her thanks for Finance's Remidios Duenas and Annette Hamman. The citizen wanted us to know that both ladies were very pleasant and helpful to her.

Kristian Ramirez, Amy Atkins, and Mike Beard Do Phenomenal Job: Police Chief Sonja Clay wrote to thank City Engineer Kristian Ramirez, Parks Director Amy Atkins and Park's Henry Nash. These three employees assisted the PD with its first civilian assessment center as part of their promotional process. Chief Clay stated, "*They did a phenomenal job*

in engaging our promotional candidates and gave them “a run for their money.” Thank you to all participants for making this a tremendous success.”

Johnathan Rosado Saves the Day: A citizen messaged the City to thank Public Works’ Johnathan Rosado. Johnathan assisted the citizen in finding a water leak on this property.