

## **CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE**

**March 31, 2026**

### **Message from the Manager:**

Fire Chief Michael Starr brings us this month's message:

#### **How Every Role Contributes to Community Safety**

The recent winter weather event was a great reminder that community safety is truly a team effort, and I want to take a moment to recognize the collective work that took place across the City of Harker Heights. While severe weather often brings challenges, it also highlights the strength of our organization and the dedication of our employees.

Public safety personnel were actively monitoring conditions and ready to respond whenever needed, but their work was only one piece of the larger effort. Our Communications teams played a critical role by keeping the community informed with timely and accurate information, helping residents make safe decisions for themselves and their families. Public Works crews worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure roadways were treated and passable, reducing hazards and supporting safe travel throughout the city.

Parks and Recreation staff also played an important role in ensuring city facilities were prepared and safe for both employees and residents. Their efforts, along with the support of administrative and support teams across the organization, helped maintain continuity of operations and ensured services remained available during changing conditions.

Events like this reinforce an important truth. Community safety is not the responsibility of any one department. It is the result of coordinated efforts, shared commitment, and a willingness to support one another. Every role within our organization contributes to the wellbeing of the community we serve, and this winter event demonstrated that commitment in action.

Thank you to each employee for the professionalism, teamwork, and dedication you bring every day. Your work, whether visible or behind the scenes, makes a meaningful difference in keeping Harker Heights safe and resilient.

### **General Updates**

#### **Retirements:**

Gary Bates retired on March 5 with 20 years of service to the City. Gary built our IT department and system from the ground up. The City has been blessed with many years of high uptime operation due to Gary's good work. Gary will be missed and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

Henry Nash retired on March 27 with 13 years of service to the City. Henry was such a tremendous leader in our Parks Department. He was a mentor to so many, including me, and we wish him a very happy retirement!

Arno Stemmer retired on March 31 with 8 years of service to the City. Arno was a steady and hard worker for Public Works. Arno worked often in tough weather conditions and spent many nights working to fix water leaks so that citizens had water on when they awoke. Arno's hard work and dedication will be missed and may he have a wonderful retirement!

**Promotions:**

Norris Lockett was promoted to the position of Crew Leader on March 14<sup>th</sup>  
Angel Rodriguez was promoted to the position of Crew Leader on March 28<sup>th</sup>  
Remedios Duenas was promoted to the position of Executive Assistant on March 28<sup>th</sup>

**Transfers:**

Joshua Hidalgo transferred to the position of Water Service Worker on March 14<sup>th</sup>

**Welcome to our new hires:**

Jeffrey Deleon was hired for the position of Water and Wastewater Utility Maintenance Supervisor on March 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Sergio Hernandez was hired for the position of Firefighter/EMT on March 10<sup>th</sup>  
Jhawnvier Smith was hired for the position of Aquatics Cashier on March 19<sup>th</sup>  
Grace Gower was hired for the position of Lifeguard on March 19<sup>th</sup>  
D'Enetta Thomas was hired for the position of Police Officer Trainee on March 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Awards:**

The City was again recognized in the We Hire Vets program with the Texas Workforce Commission.

PD's Healthy Homes was announced as the Organization of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers Central Texas Branch. This is just additional confirmation of the great work and positive impact that Ms. Erica Santoyo Gutierrez and the Healthy Homes Program has been doing in our community.

**March Kudos Award Winners:** You all do such great work serving our public and each other! Congratulations to Kelsey Coffman, Mark Hyde and Norris Lockett who were our March kudos winners! Many more to come!

**Clyde's Crossword Challenge:** This month's Clyde's Crossword Challenge winners were 1<sup>st</sup> Place – April Edwards and Crystal Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Sherill Carillo and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Lyndsey Amundson.

**Sudoku Winner:** This month's winners of the Sudoku Challenge were Lorissa Byse and Andrea Contreras!

**Heart, Kindness and Community Wellness Challenge:** The challenge winners were 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Leona Clay, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ashlyn Brooks, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place David Mitchell.

**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! It's never too late to get a card and play!

**Free Pet Vaccines Clinic:** The Pet Adoption Center held the City's first ever Free Pet Vaccines clinic March 28. 652 cats and dogs were vaccinated in the event! What a great event that displayed the great teamwork we have in our City. Per Pet Adoption Center Administrator Shiloh Wester, the event *"was running nonstop from 7am-4pm, but the Parks and Rec crew and HHPD officers arrived much earlier to get things set up and ready for us. We were able to provide vaccines and microchips to 652 dogs and cats, and couldn't have done it without the hard work, man power and brainstorming to make this event a reality. I am so thankful that we have such a great city team, and we are so grateful to have been able to provide these much needed resources to our community pet owners! Thank you to the following who worked this event: From Parks: Casey Brazzil, Quito Amerson, Angel Rodriguez, Jeremiah Quiroz and Nathan Loris. From PD: Roxy Harrill and Cory Bates. From PAC: Johnny Widener, Rose Ramon, Victoria Ellis, Starrlyn Kindrick, Gage Genthner and Kayla Seymour. PAC Volunteers: Simone Maynard-Volunteer Coordinator, Dr. Matt Flickinger, DVM-Volunteer Veterinarian, Dr. Camron Matteson, DVM-Volunteer Veterinarian, Rylan McCollum, Emma Moore, Richard Mills, Jose Herrera, Isabella Herrera, Jose Aguirre, Tyanna Lacy, Samantha Teal, Denise Rivera, Ariana Nubuo, Kelsie Dumond, Alessandra Rodriguez, and Indira Bonilla Bran. Also, a special thank you to Chief Clay, Commander Duiker, Amy Atkins, and Betiale Hawkins, for their parts in planning this event and getting the ball rolling!"*

**Aquatics' 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 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!

**Arbor Day:** Celebrate Arbor Day by planting trees in Carl Levin Park on Tuesday, April 21 at 10 a.m.

**Library Programs:** Our Library is full of great programs for the entire family to enjoy – make sure you check out the Library’s webpage for programs your family may have interest in.

### **Spotlight on Service:**

**Miranda Jones Goes Above and Beyond:** PAC Administrator Shiloh Wester wrote to show her appreciation for Miranda Jones: Shiloh wrote, Miranda *“was scheduled off on Saturday for the start of her vacation, but we had a cat come in Friday that was having birthing complications and needed to go to Emancipet for surgery Saturday morning. She offered to come in to pick up the cat and get her to the vet so that we didn’t have to pull someone from the vaccine clinic, since she knew we would be very busy there. I am very appreciative that she was willing to do that, and the cat was able to get the care she needed.”*

**Shiloh Wester Leads:** I recently wrote to thank PAC Administrator Shiloh Wester for her leadership on the pet vaccinations clinic. Shiloh has such a heart for animals! To her I wrote, *“What a wonderful event and all due to your leadership! I know you had a bunch of help for the event but your leadership guided the way in setting it all up. Very proud to have you leading our PAC!”*

**Angie Sabino, Jay Leach, Amber Love and Tyrik Alderson Appreciated:** In yet another example of working across departments, Angie Sabino, Jay Leach, Amber Love and Tyrik Alderson received a certificate of appreciation from Pathways Academic Campus for the City’s active participation and meaningful engagement with their College and Career Day on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Great job team!

**PAC is Outstanding:** Assistant Parks Director Casey Brazzil wrote to share his thanks for PAC and their vaccination clinic. Casey wrote, *“I want to say that Shiloh and her team did an amazing job at their first Shot Clinic. They worked non-stop all day. It was a lot of work for them to put this together and they did fantastic.”*

**Roxanne Harrill is Helpful:** Chief Sonja Clay wrote of appreciation she heard from PD’s Roxanne Harrill. Chief Clay wrote, *“I was told this morning that Roxy was very helpful in identifying a bit-and-run driver who damaged expensive fiber optic property that belonged to Fiber First. The company was very grateful for her investigation because she found the suspect driver, which helped get his insurance information. Nicely done.”*

**Josh DeLong, Randy Stefek and Darlene Prechtel are Excellent:** Chief Sonja Clay wrote to acknowledge the excellent work of IT’s Josh DeLong and PD’s Commander Stefek and Darlene Prechtel. Chief Clay wrote, *“Our Police Department underwent a Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) audit. Successfully passing this audit was crucial for us to continue our law enforcement activities; otherwise, our authorization to access criminal histories and such could have been revoked. With the assistance of Joshua DeLong and Commander Randy Stefek, Darlene Prechtel achieved outstanding results. I want to extend a huge shout-out to all three members for their excellent work.”*