

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

February 28, 2025

### Message from the Manager:

We continue with our guest authors for 2025, this time with our king of all things public works and world-renowned Assistant City Manager Mark Hyde:

#### *All In!*

**“If you can’t do the job right, then don’t do it at all”** was a phrase my brother and I heard from our parents at least 72 times a week, and from our Mom a few times really loud in German. I remember as early as 6-years of age, we were given specific chores around the house to complete every day. The chores never ended, they kept coming every day...take out the trash, sweep the back porch, bring in the newspaper, feed the dog. We would hurry through the work doing just enough to stay out of trouble so we could get back to playing. We worked harder looking for the fine line between acceptable and failure instead of doing the work correctly the first time. Sooner than later, Mom and Dad had a talk with their slacker bald face boys. They explained that we are put here on this earth to serve one another and help each other. Whether you are doing chores as a child or holding a job as an adult, you must always be generous with your time and talents helping others. When you accept a task, complete it with a happy heart. Meaning, you are “all in” when it comes to serving others, giving the very best of yourself. Our parents taught us the foundation for a happy and successful life along with the dignity of working contributing to family and society.

As I near the end of my narrative, I hope you are convinced of being generous with your time and talents helping others. If not, I can have my 90-year-old mother visit with you one on one and give you the same talk I received over 55 years ago!

Always remember, we have a loving God who will not be outdone in generosity.

Mark Hyde

*“I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.”*

— **Mother Teresa**

What a wonderful message! May we all work serving others with a glad heart! Check out the kudos below – your work gives so much to be joyous about! Next up in March is our very own HR Director Leona Clay!

David

### General Updates:

#### Retirements:

**Cesar Valdez Retires:** PD Officer Cesar Valdez retired on February 14<sup>th</sup>. We thank Cesar for all his years of courageous service.

**Promotions:**

Michael Beard was promoted to Director of Planning and Development/Building Official on February 22. Please congratulate Mike on his promotion!

**New Hires:**

Harry Sheppard – Water Service Worker on February 12<sup>th</sup>

Samirah Williams – Telecommunicator on February 18<sup>th</sup>

Alexis Fujikawa – Telecommunicator on February 18<sup>th</sup>

**Achievements:**

Library received the 2024 Achievement of Excellence Award

Ursula Paddie re-certified as Texas Registered Municipal Clerk

Courts received the 2025 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Award

**February Kudos Award Winners:** Congratulations to Billy Stevens, Zully Reyes, Sherill Carillo, Annette Hamman for being our February Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do, and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

**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 was an early winner last year and I already have four hits on my bingo card so far this year – can you beat me?? You can't win if you don't play – join me (but you probably won't beat me)!

**Work Out Time Challenge:** Our January team challenge began January 4 and challenges us to all perform and log the time from whatever fitness we enjoy doing. We had 14 teams of 5 as well as 13 citizens participating! First place was Harker Heights Heavyweights! Second was Thrive Tribe. Third was taken by Kiki and the Execs. Citizen winners: 1<sup>st</sup> Place Robert Griffin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Sherry Gilchrist and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Barbara Peek.

**Safety 101 Crossword Winners:** The winners of the Safety 101 Crossword Puzzle are in 1<sup>st</sup> place Nichole Ratliff and in 2<sup>nd</sup> place Lorissa Byse.

**Random Acts of Kindness Challenge:** The Random Acts of Kindness Challenge ends on February 28<sup>th</sup> – drawing for winners will be on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Harker Heights' Scavenger Hunt:** The new Harker Heights' Scavenger Hunt has begun. Check out the City's social media pages for the clues! We already have our first winner in the scavenger hunt – Nichole Ratliff! Nichole knows the City – how well do you? Put your knowledge to the test and join the scavenger hunt!

**Library Programs:** I always say our Library programs never slow – they just reload! Lisa and the Library Team have so many offerings for all ages – check out the Library's webpage or better yet stop in and visit with the Library team to learn more!

**We Love our Schools Food Drive:** The Harker Heights Parks and Recreation Department is hosting the “We Love Our Schools Food Drive” to benefit the Killeen ISD H.A.R.P. (Homeless Awareness Response Program) from now to the end of March 2025. Donation boxes are located in the lobbies of City Hall, Activities Center and the Recreation Center. Items needed include pasta, rice, mac and cheese, starches, non-perishable snacks, ramen noodles, can openers, and canned veggies. High need items include peanut butter, chili, soup, pasta sauce, canned fruit, canned meat and beans.

**Spring Community Garage Sale:** The Spring Community Garage Sale will be on Saturday, March 15 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout the City!

**First Fridays Music Series:** Coming in April the City is excited to announce the First Fridays Music Series! The event will run from April to June and September to November at Carl Levin Park Amphitheater from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Much more to come!

### **Spotlight on Service:**

**Ursula Paddie Shines Bright:** Mayor Blomquist wrote a note to Ursula congratulating her on her Texas Registered Municipal Clerk recertification. The Mayor wrote, “*your dedication to duty and*

*service to our City reflects highly upon you. We thank you for all that you do each and every day for our City and Citizens of Harker Heights.”*

**Ethan Phillips and Gage Genthner Thanked:** Pet Adoption Officers’ Ethan Phillips and Gage Genthner were thanked by a citizen for helping bring his son's dog home. They both went above and beyond to coax out the terrified pup from a tight situation and the father was beyond grateful. He brought the entire shelter staff milkshakes and cookies.

**Rose Ramon, Victoria Ellis and Ethan Phillips are Dedicated:** The neighborhood of Lakeview Estates in Salado did a donation drive for the HHPAC and delivered a letter thanking Staff. *"We hope these contributions will make a positive difference and help you continue your vital work. Additionally, we would like to thank Rose. She is always very helpful, friendly and courteous. We also want to thank Officer Ellis and Officer Phillips for their knowledge and assistance. [The Staff's] compassion and dedication make the community a better place for both animals and people."*

**Betty DeLong, Caleb Brown and Chuck Maines are Swift:** Pet Adoption Coordinator Rose Ramon would like to thank FD’s Betty DeLong and Firefighters Caleb Brown and Chuck Maines for their help in checking out one of the career student volunteers that felt ill. Their swift response and kind approach made the student feel at ease, and thankfully she was just fine.

**Pet Adoption Staff Amaze:** A citizen came in to thank the Pet Adoption Center Staff for their hard work and dedication with cookies and muffins. She was amazed and grateful that there were so many free community-centered programs, like the Pet Pantry and donation-sponsored microchips.

**Massoud Howayeck Recognized:** PD’s Officer Massoud Howayeck was thanked by a citizen via a letter received by Chief Hawkins. The citizen stated, *“his warm smile and friendly demeanor make a real impact, fostering trust and positive connections between law enforcement and the community – especially our youngest members.”*

**Josh DeLong is Creative:** Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to give a kudos to IT’s Josh DeLong *“for rocking out not one but two beautiful covers for our FY 2024 ACFR. The two covers were entirely due to my request because the first would require our auditors to use a lot of black ink for printing. Be on the lookout for which one will be used next month and huge thank you to Josh for always having ideas for covers!”*

**Angie Sabino Keeps Things Running:** HR’s Melonie Matthewson wrote to thank Library’s Angie Sabino. Melonie wrote, *“Thank you for keeping the Library running so well.”*

**Kelsey Coffman, Sherill Carillo and Zully Reyes Get Huge Kudos:** Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to thank Finance's Kelsey Coffman, Sherill Carillo and Zully Reyes. Ayesha wrote, *"I'd like to send a huge kudos to Kelsey, Sherill, and Zully for stepping in to assist me while we are short-handed. They have willingly taken on tasks and even "made" me think of additional things that they could help me with to lighten my load, big or small. The entire #hhfinance team, but these ladies specifically, have been tremendously wonderful."*

**Zully Reyes is Excellent:** A citizen wrote to thank Finance's Zully Reyes. The citizen wrote, *"I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Zullyness Reyes. She provided us excellent service this morning as we had a payment issue. She is both friendly and professional. She showed genuine concern, provided guidance, and addressed the problem to our satisfaction. She cares and it shows!"*

**Lyndsey Amundson and Amber Love-Clark Make Events Impactful:** The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) wrote to thank HR's Lyndsey Amundson and Park's Amber Love-Clark. The TWC wrote, *"Your support for our students with disabilities means the world to the schools and myself, and your contributions made this event truly impactful."*

**Annette Hamman is Praised:** A citizen called to thank Finance's Annette Hamman. Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote of the call that the citizen, *"could not praise Annette enough for being an outstanding employee stating that she was caring, had empathy for her, let her know how much she understood, and she even said that if Annette ever needed a recommendation for anything she would be happy to write one for her. Wow, what a resident! And what an employee!!"*

**Jerry Bark and Ayesha Lealiiee Win:** Fire Chief Shannon Stephens wrote to thank ACM Jerry Bark and Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee. Chief Stephens wrote, *"I want to thank both of you for finding the extra money when I arrived to purchase the hose and nozzle equipment. Our crews have made several remarks regarding how much faster our fires are being extinguished with our updated fire attack packages on our last several fires. This is really significant. I know it may seem trivial, but this is extremely important for a department our size that does not have the staffing of larger departments. Our success depends on being swift and extremely precise with our initial efforts. Your efforts have given us the necessary resources to be this. This also matters outside the realm of serving our people - but it is keeping our members safer. The more efficient we are in containing and extinguishing the fire upon our arrival, the more survivable the entire event will be for our people. I am very comfortable saying that your efforts make us better **AND** safer. As with all Fire Departments, we will always have some losses. We are winning far more than losing now. These wins are your wins too."*

**Ryan Raben, Alexandra Gloria, Luis Zelaya and John Howell Get a Shout Out:** Builders' Charles Amundson and JR, along with Courtney Meza, gave a shout-out to HHPD for keeping an eye on their new builds. They stated, *"when we visited the site at night, Officers Raben, Gloria, and Zelaya were already there conducting nightly checks. During the day, Sergeant Howell was on duty ensuring everything was secure. A big thank you for making sure we're taken care of!"*

**Corey Bates Restores Trust:** PD's Officer Corey Bates received an email of praise from a citizen. The citizen wrote, *"you have an officer who truly serves his community with integrity and heart. He didn't just do his job; he restored hope in a situation that felt hopeless. Because of him, my friend is safe, and for the first time in my life, I have a renewed sense of trust in law enforcement."*

**Molly Chauhan is Patient:** PAC Kennel Tech Miranda Jones wrote to give Veterinarian Molly Chauhan a kudos. Miranda wrote, *"I would like to nominate Dr. Molly Chauhan at the Harker Heights Pet Adoption Center! Dr. Chauhan shares her knowledge with anyone wanting to learn and is such a GREAT mentor. She always remains calm in any situation and has the most patience with every animal and person that comes into the shelter! She really is so amazing at what she does and the shelter staff is beyond grateful for her and everything that she does!"*

**Amy Atkins and Lisa Youngblood Create Legacy:** Councilmember Lynda Nash gave praise to Parks Director Amy Atkins and Library Director Lisa Youngblood for their program offerings. Councilmember Nash stated that Amy and Lisa are *"creating a legacy for citizens."*

**Sonja Clay Supports:** HR Director Leona Clay wrote to Deputy Police Chief Sonja Clay thanking her for her support on a recent investigation. Leona wrote, *"we sincerely appreciate the time and effort you took to investigate this incident for us. Thank you so very much for your support!"*

**Kristina Ramirez Assists:** Records Management Coordinator Sara Clark wrote to share her appreciation for City Engineer Kristina Ramirez. Sara wrote, *"I just wanted to say thank you so much for helping me research information for that records request earlier. And especially for being patient and taking the time to explain it to me in a way I could understand so I could relay it properly to the citizen. I appreciate you so much."*