

Message from the Manager:

This month brings a message from our uber talented HR Director Leona Clay:

Why Not Today?

We've all said it at some point in our lives: "There's always tomorrow!" It's a phrase we often use to reassure ourselves that there's no immediate rush, that we can push things off for later. But how many times have we used it to delay things that truly matter? I know I'm guilty of putting off important tasks because other, more immediate issues feel more pressing. Life has a way of demanding our attention, and sometimes, the things that should be our priorities end up on the backburner. However, the reality is that life is unpredictable, and the things we postpone today might not have the luxury of waiting for tomorrow.

One of those things that we often overlook in our busy lives is reviewing and updating our beneficiaries. It's one of those tasks that, while not immediately urgent, can have major consequences if left unchecked. Have you recently reviewed the beneficiaries on all of your accounts? It's a question I had to ask myself after experiencing several personal losses in my life. The passing of loved ones made me reflect on how I was handling my own affairs and whether I had updated the beneficiaries for things like life insurance, retirement accounts, and even money owed to me, such as funds from the City.

As I went through the process of reviewing my accounts, I made a shocking discovery: my beneficiary hadn't been updated in almost 40 years. The person I had originally designated as my beneficiary was no longer alive. This revelation was a wake-up call, reminding me how easy it is to let time slip by without addressing the important details of life. Thankfully, I took action right away, updated all of my beneficiaries, and now have peace of mind knowing that my affairs are in order.

But that experience also highlighted something deeper about life: It's easy to put off the tasks that seem less pressing, assuming that there will always be time to take care of them later. It's easy to tell ourselves that "tomorrow is another day" and that we'll handle things when the time comes. But the truth is, tomorrow isn't guaranteed for anyone. Walter Payton's words, "Tomorrow is never promised to anyone," carry a weight that's impossible to ignore, especially after experiencing the suddenness of loss. Life has a way of reminding us that things can change in an instant, and the best time to take care of important tasks is always today.

Taking the time to review your beneficiaries might seem like a small task, but it can make a world of difference. The people you care about deserve to be taken care of, and ensuring that your financial and legal affairs are in order is an important step in doing just that. It's a step that

provides security and peace of mind, knowing that your wishes will be honored, no matter what happens tomorrow.

So, take a moment today—right now, even—to look at your accounts and ensure that your beneficiaries are up to date. Life moves fast, and we never know what the future holds. Don't let tomorrow slip by without making sure you're taking care of the things that truly matter. It's one small step you can take today that could make all the difference down the road.

Leona

What a great reminder to live intentionally! Without the promise of tomorrow let's all do our part to leave the world better today than how we found it!

David

General Updates:

Retirements:

Steven McClain Retires: PD's Sgt. Steven McClain retired March 31. We thank Sgt. McClain for his service and wish him all the best in his retirement.

Promotions:

Stephanie Hall promoted to Senior Planner on March 1st

Richelle Otero promoted to City Planner on March 15th

Betiale Hawkins promoted to Director of Public Safety/Chief of Police on March 15th

Nichole Ratliff promoted to Accounts Payable Coordinator on March 31st

New Hires:

Houston Johnson hired as Assistant to the City Manager on March 17th

Lafayette Gardner hired as Wastewater Maintenance Technician on March 17th

Sabrina Jerrett hired as Police Officer Trainee on March 24th

Jared Tipton hired as Police Officer Trainee on March 24th

Transfers:

Jonathan Del Toro transferred to Heavy Equipment Operator Trainee on March 15th

Michelle Smart transferred to Planning Administrative Assistant on March 31st

March Kudos Award Winners: Congratulations to Heather Heilman, Jaime Davalos, Eve Vazquez and Rose Ramon for being our March 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 seven hits on my bingo card so far this year – can you beat me?? No winners as of the end of March! You can't win if you don't play – join me (but you probably won't beat me)!

Random Acts of Kindness Challenge: The Random Acts of Kindness Challenge ended on February 28th. Three winners were drawn from those that participated, and the winners are: 1st Place – Angela Sabino; 2nd Place – Lorissa Byse and 3rd Place – Miranda Jones! Great job ladies in leading us in showing kindness! We also had three citizen winners: 1st Place Whittani Washington; 2nd Place Marlene Duenas; and 3rd Place Pauline Jiminez.

Workplace Back Injury Prevention Crossword: The Workplace Back Injury Prevention Crossword winners were Aaliyah Smith, Heather Jenks, Fabian Brooks, Kristina Roach!

Chew on This: The March wellness challenge is called Chew on This. This challenge focuses on several small, attainable goals to help us all improve our food choices. The March Wellness Challenge runs from March 17 to April 20th.

Harker Heights' Scavenger Hunt: The new Harker Heights' Scavenger Hunt has begun. Check out the City's social media pages for 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! This time you can “Spring” with the Library! 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!

Harker Heights Arts Festival: The Harker Heights Arts Festival will be Saturday, April 5 at Carl Levin Park from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

First Fridays Music Series: Coming April 4 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Carl Levin Park Amphitheater the City will hold our first, First Fridays Music Series! The first concert will be G. Samuels and Complete Puzzle! Food trucks will be present at the event. First Friday Music Series 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! Bring out a lawn chair or a blanket and enjoy some good music and fun!

Spotlight on Service:

Leona Clay Gets a Big Kudos: Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to thank HR Director Leona Clay. Ayesha wrote, *“A big kudos and thanks to Ms. Leona for her assistance in getting together 6 job descriptions in a short turn around. Her patience and kindness shown while I worked on organizing the duties as well as her diligence in ensuring a speedy process was and is greatly appreciated!”*

Eric (Jack) Jackson and Rodney Trantham Appreciated: A citizen thanked Public Works’ Eric (Jack) Jackson and Rodney Trantham for their work. The citizen stated, *“Thank you for the work done to my driveway by Chuck’s team! It’s really nice and they did a great job. I appreciate your help and wish y’all the best.”*

Lyndsey Amundson Does Great Work: City Engineer Kristina Ramirez wrote to give a kudos to HR’s Lyndsey Amundson for a new job marketing video that Lyndsey put together. Kristina stated, *“The new video advertising our available jobs really highlights our current employees and the opportunities our City provides our employees. Great work team!”*

Nate Nesbit and Solid Waste Drop Center are Incredible: A resident came into City Hall to express his gratitude toward the staff and operations process of the Harker Heights Recycling Center. He stated that the City Staff working there today are incredibly professional and efficient, and his experience dropping materials off was great.

Shiloh Wester is Wonderful: An employee shared nice comments on Pet Adoption's Shiloh Wester during her out-processing. The employee shared that she loved working for the City and that Shiloh is a great boss and does a wonderful job!

Tom Holubec Gets a Shoutout: Court's Melissa Chevalier wrote to share her appreciation for Park's Tom Holubec. Melissa wrote, *"I want to take this time and send a special shout out to Mr. Tom. Mr. Tom is a humble gentleman of little words. It has taken awhile for him to open to us, but that vibrant smile and down to earthiness that you receive from him is truly genuine. It does not matter if he is having a bad day or not, he still takes the time to talk to us and take care of any needs that we may be having. He is someone behind the scenes and does not like the spotlight, but I feel he deserves to know that everyone in the City appreciate all he does and notices all he does."*

Ursula Paddie and Sara Gibbs Go Above and Beyond: HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank Admin's Ursula Paddie and Parks' Sara Gibbs. Leona wrote *"I wanted to take a moment to thank Ursula Paddie and Sara Gibbs for arriving early and helping set up for the breakfast celebration on March 7th. They went above and beyond to ensure everything was ready for the employees when they arrived. Their hard work and positive attitude truly made a difference and helped set the tone for a wonderful Employee Appreciation Day! Please thank them for their commitment and for always stepping up when needed!"*

Kristina Rameriz is Knowledgeable: A citizen on Next Door shared their appreciation for City Engineer Kristina Rameriz. The citizen was dealing with a private utility issue and Kristina provided them with needed information. The citizen stated that Kristina was very nice and knowledgeable.

Casey Brazzil, Billy Stevens, Donovan Martinez, and Henry Nash Show Commitment: Parks Director Amy Atkins wrote to share her praise for Park's Casey Brazzil, Billy Stevens, Donovan Martinez and Henry Nash. Amy wrote, *"A goal for our department is to organize, inventory, and declutter in order to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and better manage our assets. The week of March 10, these gentlemen worked tirelessly to tackle the two cargo trailers, storage at FD one, and the Activity Center. They worked together to eliminate clutter, organize, and inventory. The team spirit and positive attitude they displayed throughout the entire process is a testament to their commitment to the City and the department."*

Amber Love-Clark Shows Dedication: Parks Director Amy Atkins wrote to thank Parks' Amber Love-Clark for her hard work. Amy wrote, *"For her dedication and teamwork over the past few weeks. On February 28th and March 4th, when part-time staff members called in with less than an hour's notice before their evening shifts, Amber stepped up without hesitation to cover the shifts. Despite having her own family commitments, Amber rearranged her schedule to work until closing at 9 PM, always willing to go above and beyond for the team. It's this kind of selflessness and flexibility that makes Amber such a valuable member of our team. Amber continues to demonstrate what it means to be a team player, always ready to lend a hand and ensure that things run smoothly."*

John Fox and Mark Hyde are Prompt: A citizen called to express her thanks for Public Works' John Fox and Assistant City Manager Mark Hyde. The citizen stated that she was thankful for prompt service as well as the professionalism and courtesy.

Kaily Funez-Lenon Is a Big Help: Sgt. John Howell wrote to thank Court's Kaily Funez-Lenon for her assistance with the BABY program. Sgt. Howell wrote, *"Thank you for allowing Kaily to attend the BABY sessions during this class. She made a big difference in the program and the kids seemed to enjoy having her in the sessions with me. Kaily was also a big help to me, as I am currently the only Officer assigned to Community Services. I would like to see if we could implement having her come to every session in the next class like she did this one. Kaily's involvement really felt like a big improvement to the program."*

Massoud Howayeck, Luis Zelaya, Andrew Barnstable, Josephe Byrne and Josh (Caleb) Brown are Commended: Library's Heather Heilman wrote to commend PD Officers Massoud Howayeck, Luis Zelaya, and Andrew Barnstable along with Firefighters Josephe Byrne and Josh (Caleb) Brown for an incident involving her mother. Heather stated that her mother, *"repeatedly commented on how professional they all were. They were all very kind and helped to reassure her regarding everything that had taken place. It was a rather minor incident but it is good for me to know that she was well taken care of."*

Jazmyn Lee and Erica Lozano are Amazing: PD's Sgt. John Howell wrote to thank PD's Healthy Home team Jazmyn Lee and Erica Lozano for their assistance. Sgt. Howell wrote, *"I just wanted to thank you for allowing Jazmine and Erica to stay and help me out yesterday. They were an amazing help I could not have been successful without them. They made the whole event enjoyable."*

Heather Heilman Impresses: Library's Heather Heilman had a local author write to thank her. The author wrote, *"thank you very much for what you do. I can't say enough good things about you. I look forward to the event and will tell my friends and family about your library and the wonderful work that you do."*

Gage Genthner Appreciated: Pet Adoption Manager Shiloh Wester wrote to share her thanks for Animal Control Services Officer Gage Genthner. Shiloh wrote, *“I want to take a moment to appreciate Gage Genthner, Animal Services Officer, for being an amazing asset to the Pet Adoption Center. Gage has been with PAC for about 7 months now and came to us with no animal control experience, but has quickly learned all the tricks of the trade, with enthusiasm! Last week, while he was assigned On Call for afterhours emergency and animal calls, Gage responded to more calls than we’ve ever had in a one week period. Most of the calls that came in were wildlife that was either injured or ill, and he had to learn some valuable skills on the spot on how to safely catch a sick skunk! He was also able to secure and return home a lost dog that was called in by a fellow city employee, and the owner was very thankful. I am grateful to have Gage on our team!”*

Arno Stemmer and Nate Trimble Praised: Public Works’ Arno Stemmer and Nate Trimble were thanked by Water Supervisor Todd Maxon for their work winterizing water infrastructure. Todd stated, *“I need to give Arno and Nate the thanks they deserve for building the enclosure around the Cedar Oaks fill line and the sample points. This past winter we had no problems with this site freezing during the cold. I just wanted to let you know what a good job they did not only at Cedar Oaks but at all the tanks preparing for the freeze this year.”*