

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

May 30, 2025

Message from the Manager:

Last month's message came from our City Engineer Kristina Ramirez and in it she reinforced the importance of mentorship. Mentors are found throughout our organization. Kristina's message made me reflect on the many in our organization that mentor me. Team members like Parks' Henry Nash and Billy Stevens who bring joy and ownership to all they do. HR's Melonie Matthewson who brings the same positive energy with her to work every day. Our entire Finance team who often deal with upset customers but still manage to be the "kudos" team. Officer Massoud Howayeck who has a knack for solving issues and creating fans. Streets' Supervisor Chuck Adams who can handle any difficult customer no matter the situation. I could go on and on. So many of you inspire me to serve better through your hard work every day.

One mentor to me, and to so many of us, was Finance's Susan Crawley. After a heroic battle with cancer, we lost Susan this past week. Susan was a joyful servant. Time spent with her was always uplifting. She had a joy about her that drew people to her. She was smart and dedicated to our team. Susan was strong. A beautiful strength that allowed her to be the Susan we all knew and loved even when on so many days she didn't feel her best. Susan **chose** joy and to uplift others every day. What a powerful example Susan's life is to me! May we honor the way she served by modeling her example!

Who can you mentor? Who will you allow to mentor you? Let's spur one another on to higher levels of service!

David

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." - **John Quincy Adams**

"Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing." - **Albert Schweitzer**

"Your actions speak so loud I can't hear what you say." – **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

General Updates:

New Hires:

Grace Gower – Lifeguard on May 5th

Diego Plata - Lifeguard on May 5th
Luz Barreto Gonzalez – Aquatics Supervisor on May 5th
Kage Carmichael – Water Service Worker on May 5th
Amy Pafford – Water Safety Instructor on May 5th
Heather Hollis – Aquatics Cashier on May 5th
Matthew Burns – Lifeguard on May 6th
Joshua Hidalgo – Telecommunicator on May 12th
Haiyan Chen – Aquatics Cashier on May 16th
Vincent Palmisano – Lifeguard on May 16th
Ileana Alexander – Lifeguard on May 17th
Nathan Cassidy – Aquatics Supervisor on May 19th
Daniel Carmichael – Drainage Light Equipment Operator on May 19th
Bianca Alexander – Water Safety Instructor on May 23rd
Rachel Yancey – Summer Library Page on May 27th
Sofia Ramirez – Summer Library Page on May 27th
Latedra Sather – Telecommunicator on May 27th
Kalena Amani, Jr. – Lifeguard on May 29th

Accomplishments:

Fabian Brooks achieved State Licensed Plumbing Inspector certification
Justin Elliott achieved Fire Officer II and Incident Safety Officer certifications
Jeremy Albright achieved Driver/Operator certification
Justin Moore completed his Step Up Captain Task Book
Charles Maines completed his Step Up Driver/Operator Task Book
Caleb Brown completed his Step Up Driver/Operator Task Book

May Kudos Award Winners: Congratulations to Josh Delong, John Leivan, and Todd Maxon for being our May Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do, and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

Cinco De Mayo Salsa Challenge: Winners were: First Place – Houston Johnson, Second Place – Lyndsey Amundson, and Third Place – tie between Catharina Hoffman and Andrea Contreras.

Stress Less Challenge: The Stress Less Challenge winners will be selected June 3rd. Please submit your completed challenge log by 5 p.m. on June 2nd.

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 **ten** hits on my bingo card so far this year – can you beat me?? No winners as of the end of May! You can't win if you don't play – join me (but you probably won't beat me)!

Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge: This month's Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge was about workplace violence. Winners were 1st Place – Kaily Funez-Lenon, 2nd Place – Heather Jenks, 3rd Place – Aaliyah Smith!

Harker Heights Farmers Market: It's back! The Harker Heights Farmers Market is officially back! The Market runs every Saturday from May 3 to July 26 and then again from October 4 to December 6.

First Fridays Music Series: Join us Friday, June 6 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Carl Levin Park Amphitheater for the First Fridays Music Series! The June 6 concert will be The First Calvary Division Pop Band! Food trucks will be present at the event. First Friday Music Series will run through June and again September to November at Carl Levin Park Amphitheater from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Bring out a lawn chair or a blanket and enjoy some good music and fun!

Big Truck Day: One of our most popular yearly programs Big Truck Day will be on Wednesday, June 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Harker Heights Community Park! A sensory-friendly time with less loud noises will be held from 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Come check out fire engines,

police vehicles, street machines, Metaverse Game Truck, a bounce house, and rumor even has it the Mayor may be there with his Cybertruck!

Spotlight on Service:

Nathan Loris and Norris Lockett Thanked: HR Director Leona Clay wrote to express her thanks for Park's Nathan Loris and Norris Lockett. Leona wrote, *"I wanted to take a minute to give a Kudos to Nathan Loris and Norris Lockett for the outstanding work I observed being carried out by them on Friday, May 23rd at the Carl Levin Park. Their dedication and attention to detail in maintaining the park's cleanliness, landscaping, and overall appearance did not go unnoticed. It was clear that they take great pride in their responsibilities. Please extend my gratitude to them for their hard work and commitment."*

Erica Lozano and Jazmyne Lee Get a Shoutout: PD Deputy Chief Sonja Clay wrote to express her appreciation for PD's Healthy Homes Erica Lozano and Jazmyne Lee. Sonja wrote, *"I want to give a huge shoutout to the ladies in Healthy Homes. Erica Lozano and Jazmyne Lee planned and coordinated this year's Health Fair, which was a tremendous success. These remarkable ladies managed to bring in numerous community partners from the health industry, as well as other organizations. Additionally, for the first time, Harker Heights Healthy Homes was able to offer breast cancer screenings to women who typically might avoid this important health check due to financial concerns. The Healthy Homes team truly excelled, and we are immensely grateful for their exceptional efforts."*

Chris Mahlstedt and Fire Department Commended: PD Chief Betiale Hawkins wrote to thank FD Interim Chief Chris Mahlstedt. Betiale wrote, *"I wanted to commend Interim Chief Mahlstedt and our fire department for the successful TCOLE audit that was conducted on 04-29-2025. During this audit, no deficiencies were noted. Great job to the team."*

Michael O'Hala is Exceptional: Pct 4 Bell County Constable Sergeant Isen Ismaili wrote to thank PD's Sgt. Michael O'Hala. Constable Sgt. Ismaili wrote, *"I am writing to formally commend Sgt. O'Hala of the Harker Heights Police Department for his exceptional support and professionalism during the state-mandated ALERT training held on May 8th and 9th... Given the importance and complexity of the course, I was initially apprehensive. That changed when Sgt. O'Hala despite being scheduled off-duty on May 8th, volunteered his time and expertise. He arrived early, remained for the entire day, and led the classroom instruction while also helping design and run training scenarios. Sgt. O'Hala's commitment extended well beyond the scheduled hours. After the first day's session concluded, he continued working with us into the*

evening, walking us through the second day's curriculum and offering detailed guidance on both the material and scenario execution. His mentorship and insight elevated the overall quality and delivery of the training experience...Sgt. O'Hala exemplifies the highest standards of public service. His dedication, leadership, and willingness to support fellow officers - even on his own time - reflect great credit upon himself and the Harker Heights Police Department. He is a tremendous asset to both the department and the broader law enforcement community. On behalf of the entire training team and the officers who benefited from this course, I extend my sincere thanks to Sgt. O'Hala for his outstanding service, and to the department for fostering such exemplary leadership within its rank."

Gary Bates Supports: Councilmember Shane Hodyniak wanted me to share his gratitude for IT Director Gary Bates and said *"Please share my appreciation for all he does. His support has been instrumental in my ability to serve and I am very grateful."*

Amber Love-Clark, Casey Brazzil, Kaily Funez-Lenon and Andrea Contreras are Incredible: Parks Director Amy Atkins wrote to thank Amber Love-Clark, Casey Brazzil, Kaily Funez-Lenon and Andrea Contreras for their assistance with the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. Amy wrote, *"When I began putting the organizing committee together, I asked for a volunteer or two from PARD and both Amber Love-Clark and Casey Brazzil stepped up without hesitation. Their leadership on the committee was instrumental in making the event a success. One council member even described it as 'the best one he'd attended in 5 years.'" I also want to give a special shoutout to Kaily Funez-Lenon and Andrea Contreras. Kaily took on the role of MC with great enthusiasm, even though it was her first time attending the event and handled it like a champ. When it came time to serve food, Andrea jumped in promptly and willingly, helping to serve all the amazing volunteers with warmth and grace. It was truly a team effort, and I'm so grateful for the dedication and spirit everyone brought to this event."*

Amber Love-Clark Brings Passion: Park's Casey Brazzil wrote to thank Amber Love Clark. Casey wrote, *"Amber has done an outstanding job in the athletic department. She handles herself with passion and knowledge. She also had a major part in the Volunteer reception. She was the main reason that it went so well. Amber is a true asset to the City."*

Jeremiah Quiroz Steps Up: Park's Casey Brazzil wrote to thank Jeremiah Quiroz. Casey wrote, *"Jeremiah stepped up at Community Park while his co-worker has been out. He has maintained his park by himself. I called him to come help mow the Library before the Volunteer reception. He was the first one there and he started mowing and picking up trash before anyone else."*

Lisa Youngblood, Melonie Matthewson, Kaily Funez-Lenon and Rod Palmer are Wonderful: Harker Heights Elementary School wrote to thank Lisa Youngblood, Melonie Matthewson, Kaily Funez-Lenon and Rod Palmer. The School's SEL Specialist Abigail Scott wrote, *"I just wanted to reach out and say thank you again for volunteering your time and resources for our students today. I know it was busy and there was some unexpected chaos at*

different points, but I'm so thankful for everyone's flexibility, positivity, and understanding. It was wonderful to see the smiles on our students' faces and hear about their favorite parts of the day. We're thankful our campus has such a wonderful community and that our students were able to hear from each of you today. All of you made an impact."

Charles Maines, Kaleb Sparkman, Justin Elliott, Kellie Mozek, Jordan Clopton and Joshua Larremore Appreciated: FD Division Chief Ray Gandara wrote to share his appreciation for the good work of Charles Maines, Kaleb Sparkman, Justin Elliott, Kellie Mozek, Jordan Clopton and Joshua Larremore. Ray wrote, *"On January 28th, 2025, at approximately 1300 hours, our Central Station crew responded to a report of a man down with unknown status. They arrived on the scene within five minutes and quickly identified that the patient was in cardiac arrest. Without hesitation, the crew initiated lifesaving interventions. Thanks to their rapid response and skilled care, the patient was successfully resuscitated and transported to the hospital. The patient was discharged one week later with no neurological deficits, a truly outstanding outcome. I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the following individuals: Charles Maines, Kaleb Sparkman, Justin Elliott, Kellie Mozek, Jordan Clopton, and Joshua Larremore. Their professionalism, composure, and quick thinking in a critical moment directly contributed to saving a life. This incident serves as a powerful reminder of the real impact our first responders make each and every day."*

Trevor Jorgensen gets a Kudos: Planning's Michelle Smart wrote to give a kudos to Planning's Trevor Jorgensen. Michelle wrote, *"I just want to give a big Kudos to Trevor. Trevor is always professional with customers and has been able to de-escalate several upset citizens and contractors since my time in Planning. Many customers have called to say how great he is and how much help he has been with the permitting process. He also has been a great help with making my transition to Planning easier!"*

Randy Stefek, Heather Jenks and Yesmarie Burgos-Figueroa Recognized: Deputy Chief Sonja Clay wrote to thank PD Commander Stefek, Detective Jenks, and Detective Burgos-Figueroa. Sonja wrote, *"We have been facing a challenging criminal issue and weren't quite sure of how to address it. Commander Stefek and Detective Jenks confronted this problem directly and thought "outside the box" by utilizing criminal statutes that our agency is not typically familiar with. They proactively reached out to state agency contacts to gather information on the legal aspects of these statutes. While other cities grapple with similar situations our department demonstrated creativity by using a different approach. Both Commander Stefek and Detective Jenks coordinated with state police to conduct a night operation, and Detective Burgos-Figueroa volunteered to assist with this initiative. This innovative and somewhat unconventional strategy was a complete success and could serve as a model for other police departments to tackle similar challenges. I am so proud of these three members of our Police Department!"*

Trevor Jorgenson is Dedicated: Planning Director/Building Official Michael Beard wrote to give thanks for Planning's Trevor Jorgenson: Michael wrote, *"I have received feedback*

from several contractors and citizens over the last few weeks about how great Trevor is to work with. His upbeat attitude, dedication, and willingness to go above and beyond make him an invaluable asset to this department. We're fortunate to have him on our team, ensuring that customers are met with exceptional service from the very first interaction."

Casey Brazzil and City Staff Valued: Citizen Rick Keagle wrote to thank Casey Brazzil and City staff for all that was done to honor Jerry Bark for his retirement.

Kristina Roach Makes it Happen: A citizen called to express their thanks for Public Works' Kristina Roach. The citizen needed assistance with a broken trash can. Kristina worked to get the can replaced quickly and the citizen was very thankful for the prompt action.