

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

June 30, 2023

Message from the Manager:

I'm proud to say that Mike Gentry is my friend! Mike was our longest serving Police Chief with 23 years of service before retiring in 2018. Most recently, Mike rejoined our organization in a mentoring and teaching role as the Director of Police Services. Many of you who may not have known Mike got to know him through some of the training courses he provided. Having completed the scope of work he laid out, he then resigned from his duties effective this month. When I think of those who have been a mentor to me in my career, Mike Gentry will always be high on that list. Many of you that know him well probably have him on your list as well. Mike has the gift of speech! He has an amazing ability to present and weave stories in a way that holds his audience's attention fully. Mike is also a man of integrity and his love for other is evident in all he does. At this most recent "retirement" party, we unveiled the newly named Michael R. Gentry Training Room as a testament to his passion for teaching and as a reminder of all who follow of Mike's great work in our organization.

Mike is known throughout our organization for his life teaching of, "do it right and do it right now." But that was not all his teachings – in fact he had an entire "gospel" that PD has put together and recently shared. In fact, a list of the "Gospel According to Gentry" is permanently mounted in the training room that now bears his name. This list of life lessons has many teachings for us all and thanks to PD we all now have a copy:

The "Gospel" According to Gentry

1. Do it right and do it right now.
2. It ain't about you...never has been.
3. Always do what is right, only then do you have the right to expect it of others.
4. The measure of the person is not to what they have done, but who they have helped.
5. Success is measured by how valuable you are to others.
6. The ability of a person to move quickly and efficiently through life is inversely proportional to the size of the bag of "stuff" they are dragging with them. Some people need to put down their "bag".
7. The most under-utilized command in American law enforcement is "Quit It".
8. The most under-utilized question in American law enforcement is, "Do you understand?"
9. People don't do what is "expected" of them, they do what is "inspected" of them.
10. All human behavior is purposeful and pleasure (award) seeking. Therefore, the most important rewards are selfless ones.
11. We change behavior by changing rewards. (see number 6)
12. Leadership is hard because the stakes are so high.
13. Remember to do what your Momma taught you.
14. Genuine concern for people and being right by them is the best motivation for any decision.
15. We are all teachers, that much is certain. The question that must be asked is, "what do we teach?"

16. It's better to get fired for doing what is right than it is to keep a job for doing what is wrong.
17. Good leadership and accountability saves careers.
18. In law enforcement, a "leadership" coward is more dangerous than a "street" coward.
19. Right is right and wrong is wrong. The challenge is knowing the difference and making hard choices.
20. Tell the truth, even when it hurts. That pain is temporary, but the damage caused from lying is permanent.
21. To honorably administer authority, one must first learn to honorably submit to it.
22. No good bosses were first bad employees.
23. No one ever succeeded solely based on their own merit. There was always someone else who gave them a chance.
24. No ship ever drifted safely into port.

Mike left our organization better than he found it. His legacy can be seen in all aspects of our Police Department and across our organization including my chair as City Manager. You see, Mike didn't just teach, he modeled his lessons everyday which is why he had such a profound impact on people and on our organization. We each can learn much from his example and in turn help leave this organization and the citizens we serve better off than we found them. I greatly enjoyed getting to serve with Mike once again, if only briefly. While retired from our organization, he will always be family to us all!

David

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."

— John Bunyan

General Updates:

New Hires:

Welcome to all our new hires:

Emily Weems hired for the position of Student Library Page on June 1st

Casey Yonkey hired for the position of Lifeguard on June 1st

Anna Lajarin Rivero hired for the position of WSI on June 5th

Peyton Carpenter hired for the position of Student Library Page on June 12th

Angela Lloyd hired for the position of Part Time Juvenile Case Manager on June 12th

Israel Acuna hired for the position of Animal Services Officer on June 12th

Bianca Alexander hired for the position of Lifeguard on June 22nd

Luke Furness hired for the position of Firefighter/EMT on June 26th

Eric Tapia hired for the position of Lifeguard on June 26th

Richelle Otero hired for the position of Planning Administrative Assistant

Grace McKenna hired for the position of Lifeguard on June 28th

Rebecca Kennedy was hired for the position of Lifeguard on June 29th

Promotions:

Congratulations to all those promoted:

Jacob Cardona promoted to Battalion Chief on June 10th

Charles Brummett promoted to Lieutenant on June 10th

Rene Fernandez promoted to Lieutenant on June 10th

Nicholas Olson promoted to Driver/Pump Operator on June 10th

Jonathan Gutz promoted to Driver/Pump Operator on June 10th

Victoria Ellis promoted to Kennel Technician on June 10th

Fabian Brooks promoted to Code Enforcement Officer on June 12th

June Kudos Award Winners: Congratulations to our June Kudos Award Winner: HR's Wilson Riley! We are so proud of Wilson and how she represents the organization. She is a role model for us all. Many more Kudos Awards to come throughout the organization!

Team Relay Challenge: Seven teams of five are participating in the Team Relay Challenge. It has been a physical as well as a communication challenge. I can say I am greatly enjoying my team which is led by Parks' Donovan Martinez who has been a great team leader!

Farmers Market: The Harker Heights Farmers Market is back! The season began Saturday, May 6 and runs through October. The Market is held in the City Hall parking lot. Come out and get fresh vegetables and other interesting and unique crafts!

Back to School Drive: PD's Healthy Homes is currently accepting donations for their Back-to-School supplies drive.

Food Drive: The Activities Center is partnering with the PD Healthy Homes Division for a Food Drive. Please help us collect non-perishable foods that will be served to families in need within our community. Drop off boxes are located at the Activities Center and at the Rec Center. Items needed are rice, beans, pasta, pasta sauce, and cereal. The drive will continue to accept donations through July 17.

Spotlight on Service:

Officer Valdez Commended: PD's Caesar Valdez was commended by a citizen he had a traffic interaction with. The citizen stated that Officer Valdez was professional, respectful, and communicated clearly. The citizen concluded that they were thankful "to this officer and your entire PD for being committed to keeping us safe in every aspect of your job; not only when you hand out consequences to law breakers but through your conduct in doing so."

Adam Trujillo Helps Out: Library's Heather Heilman wrote to thank Park's Adam Trujillo for always being so helpful. She stated, "I would like to let you know how much Adam Trujillo does to help out the staff at the library. If we have any kind of problem or need help in any way (big or small) he is quick to step up and offer a helping hand. He always does so with a great attitude and expecting nothing in return. He has been extra helpful with our A/C problems. He is constantly trying to find some way to keep us all more comfortable, offering up any free space on the Activities

Center side for us to work in a cool environment. I cannot tell you what a pleasure it is to work with a natural leader and servant to the public and his fellow coworkers.”

Gary Bates Cares: Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to thank IT Director Gary Bates for his assistance. Ayesha stated, “I appreciate the assist and am glad to have someone with your caring attitude to work with.”

IT Department is Wonderful: Library’s Angela Sabino thanked IT for their assistance in moving items due to the heat in the Library. She stated, “They have been extremely helpful, kind and informative to us especially with this moving process.”

Adam Trujillo Goes Above and Beyond: Library’s Angela Sabino also wrote to thank Park’s Adam Trujillo. She stated, “he has gone above and beyond in helping us move by moving furniture, (our Christmas tree) and his kind disposition to create work spaces so that we can be comfortable in the activities side. I feel very happy to be part of such a great team.”

Streets Department Noticed: Former Mayor Spencer Smith called to thank the Street Department for all the hard work he is seeing around the City. He noted they were fixing several areas and their work was excellent.

Sign Department Gets Kudos: Former Mayor Smith also complimented Public Works’ Sign Department for the quality and consistency of the new signs being put up around the City.

Nate Nesbit is One Cool Guy: A citizen contacted the City to thank Public Works’ Nate Nesbit. He stated that Nate is great and is the “coolest, laid back guy...”. He stated Nate is always “smiling and upbeat.”

Eve Vazquez Praised: Finance’s Eve Vazquez was praised by a citizen she recently assisted. The citizen stated that Eve had “excellent customer service,” and was, “extremely helpful, patient and calming.”

FD’s B-Shift Makes it Special: FD’s B-Shift recently visited a four-year-old camp at the YMCA. The YMCA wrote to thank B-shift and that the kids “had a blast and it made their day.” Further, B-Shift “were so kind and patient with all the children and it made it that much more special.”

Tracy Zynda is Wonderful: A defendant passed on a kudos for Court’s Tracy Zynda. He stated Tracy “was so patient and kind that he had to tell me (Court Administrator Catharina Hoffman)in person how wonderful she is.”

IT Department is Talented: City Secretary Julie Helsham wrote to show her appreciation for the entire IT Department for their assistance with the new agenda software. Julie stated she wanted to express her “appreciation for the time, talent and expertise” of IT staff. She also stated that, “the launch and transition to the new software went very smooth because of the hard work and dedication” IT staff provided.