

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

November 30, 2023

Message from the Manager:

I'm not sure where all the time went, but here we are in the holiday season! Before we totally slip into time with family (and food comas), let's talk a little about being present. Time it stands still for no one. The way time flies by it is so important for us to live in the moment and to put aside distractions and just be present. As I have aged, I have new perspectives on time and our world. For instance, when I see a beautiful skyline I stop and take it in knowing that it is unique and the only time to enjoy it is right now. Life around us is just like that, the time we live in now is unique. There will be no replays. This holiday season I ask you to join me in being present. Take some time to really connect with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers realizing that this moment, just like a skyline, is unique and finite. I have found that taking time to connect with those around us brings with it an appreciation of the many blessings we have. I think if you too will take that time you may even be surprised by the blessings around you and at a minimum you will have a fuller heart from doing so. Connection and appreciation for the things we have are key components to renewal as we get ready for a new year.

Speaking of 2024, where are you going? Lewis Carrol once wrote, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." Carrol's quote provides a touch of humor while making a life impacting truth. Unfortunately, we all can be guilty of not having a clear vision for what we want to achieve and how we will achieve it. It is our custom around this time of year to really look at our lives and plan for what we call "new year resolutions." These resolutions can become the start of that roadmap that gets us to our desired destination. To do that they have to be more than desires, they must go deeper than simply what we hope to achieve. Proper goal setting provides tangible steps that will help you achieve those desires. What is one of the most common resolutions made? To lose weight of course! That common resolution has been made and broken so many times to the point that it has spawned humor such as, *I am going to open a gym called "Resolutions." It will have exercise equipment for the first 2 weeks, and then turn into a bar for the rest of the year.* So many of us list that one with great intention, but we fail on identifying, and sticking to, the steps we will need to get there. If I want to lose weight, I must go beyond a goal that simply says I want to lose so many pounds. I must list the steps I will take (diet and what type, what type of exercise, how will I hold myself accountable, etc.). I encourage you to take the time over the next month to properly plan for what you want to achieve personally and professionally. I also ask for you to commit thought to how you will achieve your desires and write down both the desires and the steps to achieve them. HR will be including some reminders and some encouragement toward goal setting to reinforce this over the next month. I want to see you accomplish all that you desire in life, but only you know those passions and only you can make it happen!

I am excited to get to share some time celebrating you all on December 5th at your Employee Recognition Ceremony. Through your service, we have had an outstanding year! I and the City Council are so proud of the work that is accomplished through your service. I can't wait to see where 2024 takes us a team!

David

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.” —Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

“A year from now, you may wish you had started today.” —Karen Lamb

“If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy, and inspires your hopes.” —Andrew Carnegie

General Updates:

New Hires:

Welcome to all our new hires:

Lizette Brooks hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on November 27th.

Promotions:

Congratulations to all those promoted:

- Sara Brockman promoted to Lieutenant on November 11th.
- William Greenwood promoted to Lieutenant on November 11th.

Accomplishments:

- Desiraye Torres – PD’s Healthy Homes’ Desiraye Torres was recognized with the Rising Star Award from the Harker Heights’ Chamber Vision Class!
- The City was awarded the HIRE Vets Gold Medallion Award from the US Department of Labor!
- The City was also recognized by the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Veterans Commission with the We Hire Vets recognition!

November Kudos Award Winner: Congratulations to our Building Official Michael Beard! Michael does a great job of navigating the difficult job of building plans review and inspection. Despite the difficulty of the job, Michael received enough kudos to make him November’s Kudos Award Winner! There are many more kudos awards to come for team members all through our organization!

November Team Challenge: The November Team Challenge was called Weightsgiving. While it had catchy team names such as “Thighs before Pies”, the team that prevailed was Hustle 4 Muscle. That team was made up of Leona Clay, Sam Halabi, Desiraye Torres and David Mitchell. Congrats to all who participated!

December Challenge: HR has information forthcoming on a 12 Days of Wellbeing challenge. If you have yet to participate, I encourage you to join us! Those that have participated have really enjoyed the challenges!

Lt. Jay Leach Assists with Special Olympics: PD's Lt. Jay Leach participated in LETR (work out with a cop) for Special Olympics in Austin. Jay supported special Olympians with the HIIT (High Intensity Physical Training) to help prepare them for the Summer Special Olympic Games. Great job Jay Leach casting that net of service far and wide!

Blue Santa Collecting New Bikes: The Community Services Division is collecting new children's bicycles for our Blue Santa program until December 10th.

Tree Lighting Ceremony: The annual Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held today, November 30th at City Hall at 6 p.m. The Tree Lighting Ceremony is a favorite of mine! Come get your good cheer on as we head into the month of December and Christmas with family and friends!

Frost Fest: This year Frost Fest will be a two-day event, held on Friday and Saturday, December 8 and 9 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on both nights. The event will take place at the Harker Heights Community Park. Bring your family and friends for the Holiday Market, fun activities for all ages, photo ops, and a visit with the famous Santa Claus!

Thanksgiving Meals: Healthy Homes recently provided Thanksgiving meals for 33 families representing 166 individuals. Destinee Henderson wrote, "We wanted to take the opportunity to express our gratitude and thanks to everyone who donated their time and money to the families that were fed this year for Thanksgiving. Together we were able to feed a total of 33 families, which totaled to a number of 166 individuals. All 33 families have faced challenging times this year and greatly appreciated us reaching out to them to offer a meal. We are proud and thankful to be a part of such a caring and motivated team. Again, thank you all so much for your hard work and dedication."

Spotlight on Service:

Wilson Riley and HR Get it Done: Park's Nichole Broemer wrote to thank Wilson Riley and HR for their hiring efforts. Nichole stated, "Thank you and your team for your hard work getting personnel on board."

Finance is the Best: A citizen contacted Finance about a concern over their water bill. Through Finance's prompt attention and action, they were able to inform the citizen of a water leak. The citizen stated that he had just moved to Harker Heights from another city and had received the best customer service here! The citizen stated we go above and beyond and are friendly while doing so.

PD's Brandi Brothers is Great: City Secretary Julie Helsham wrote to show here appreciation of PD's Brandi Brothers. Julie stated, "Communication on status updates and responses with us has been so great that we are having to keep up with y'all! I am super impressed because I know this is hard work. I appreciate the work and efforts your department is putting in to making sure we get this done."

Gary Bates is Appreciated: HR's Leona Clay wrote to thank IT's Gary Bates for his assistance getting things posted online. Leona wrote, "Your work is greatly appreciated!"

PD, Parks and Public Works Show Teamwork: Parks' Casey Brazzil wrote of his thanks for PD's Roxanne Harrill, Corey Bates, Dustin Weaver, Richard Hatfield; Public Works' Chuck Adams and crew; and Parks' Henry Nash, Billy Stevens and Nathan Menjares. Cassey wrote, "We could have not done this without their help. They are an asset to the City."

Betty Delong Does Beautiful Work: HR's Lyndsey Amundson complimented Betty Delong on her work on the Fire Departments' Facebook page. Lyndsey stated, "I want to give a Kudos to Betty for keep the Fire Departments Facebook page informed and beautiful! She does a great job posting flyers and pictures of the employees!"

Citizen Volunteer John Footman, Parks John Leivan and Tom Holubec Help Out: Courts' Andrea Contreras wrote to thank John Footman, Park's John Leivan and Tom Holubec. Andrea stated, "I wanted to take a moment to express my appreciation to John Footman and John Leivan for all their help moving these heavy boxes to our storage space. It would have taken me the whole day without their help. I also wanted to thank Mr. Tom for his generosity and thoughtfulness. He always goes above and beyond what is asked of him in his work; he is always willing to help others and, most importantly, takes great delight in keeping the city hall in good condition."

Finance Impresses: A new resident stopped to give a kudos to Finance staff. She stated that everyone was smiling, friendly and willing to assist customers without hesitation.

Finance Brings the Energy: A resident wrote a note thanking Finance for assistance with processing a payment. The citizen stated they appreciated Finance's, "time and energy."

PD's Andrew Barnstable and Matthew Enos Show Compassion: Recently, PD's Andrew Barnstable and Matthew Enos helped a soldier who was having a personal crisis. Their quick action and interaction kept the soldier from harm. Fort Hood has reached out to honor the officers for their work.

Water Department is Tough: Former Mayor Ed Mullen shared with me how proud he is of our Public Works' Water Department. He stated that the crew was out in cold weather and working all night to repair leaks and he had noticed their hard work and was proud of them all.

Lisa Youngblood is a Rockstar: A citizen wrote to share their great thanks for Library Director Lisa Youngblood. The citizen stated what a great job Lisa does "promoting our HH Library activities, our City involvement with Community, which makes our City so GREAT!!"

Casey Brazzil Leads the Team: I recently thanked Casey Brazzil for his assistance in cleaning up several areas around the City. Within these kudos you will see one from Casey to the team that assembled across several departments to get the job done. I am thankful for the entire team and especially Casey for taking the lead and working across departments to get the job done!

Healthy Homes Serves Others: PD's Karry Fow wrote to express her thanks for PD's Healthy Homes program. Karry stated "kudos to Destinee Henderson and Desiraye Torres, you both worked tirelessly for these families to make sure they had a wonderful Thanksgiving! Great job!!"

Mark Hyde and Public Works Get it Resolved: A citizen wrote and sent pictures to thank Mark Hyde and his Public Works crews. The citizen stated that, “we were kept informed and the crews out here did a great job in spite of the weather and impatient homeowners...they left our yard better than they found it and yes, the sprinkler is repaired...best regards and continued success.”

Wilson Riley Goes the Extra Mile: HR Director Leona Clay wrote to thank HR’s Wilson Riley for doing some extra research. Leona wrote, “Thanks for going the extra mile to check!”

Todd Maxon, Arno Stemmer and Jaime Davalos do an Excellent Job: A citizen wrote to thank Public Works’ Todd Maxon, Arno Stemmer and Jaime Davalos for repairing a water line. The citizen said they were informative, friendly, and helpful and did an excellent job!

City of Harker Heights is an Incredible Partner: Lemonade Day Fort Cavazos Area wrote to thank the City “for being an incredible partner and sponsor to Lemonade Day...The City of Harker Heights is our 2023 Entrepreneur of the Year award sponsor and helps us continue to inspire our community’s future leaders. We would also like to give a special shout out to the amazing Harker Heights Parks & Recreation department for always being committed to supporting the Lemonade Day program!”

FD Keeps the Ball Rolling: Retired Fire Chief Leon Charpentier shared on social media his thanks for the FD’s continued support of The Santa Pal program. Leon stated, “So very glad you guys are keeping up this great project we started nearly 50 years ago. Thanks for supporting Harker Heights’ citizens in need.”

Mayor and City Council Appreciated: Boys Scout Troop 229 wrote to thank the Mayor and Council for allowing them to be involved in a recent meeting. The Scouts stated that they “learned a lot about the local government. Thank you for the warm welcome, allowing us to lead the Pledge, and your extra time at the Council gathering.”

HR Achieves Award: Assistant City Manager Jerry Bark wrote to congratulate HR for the receiving the 2023 HIRE VETS Gold Medallion Award. Only two cities in Texas received the award! Jerry wrote, “Congratulations to our Human Resources Department, who works extremely hard to recruit, hire, and retain all employees.”