

**Message from the Manager:**

***It's Relationships, Stupid***

It's that time again! How do I know? Well, I hear the conversations all around me, I can't get away from it (nor can you) on the TV, and my social media feeds are clogged with it. Yep, it's election season! Adding to the hype is that it is a presidential election year. Democrat Strategist Jim Carville famously said, "*It's the economy, stupid,*" in 1992, a focus that had a profound impact on Bill Clinton's successful run for President. Well to borrow, from Mr. Carville and to add a little flavor of my own, it's relationships, stupid! I personally have friends who are estranged from other friends and even family due to their political beliefs. I always hear Johnny Cash's song (written by Jack H. Clement) "The One on the Right is on the Left" about a folksong group who could not put their political leanings aside to even hold a concert. From the song:

*Well the curtain had ascended  
A hush fell on the crowd  
As thousands there were gathered  
To hear the folk songs of our land*

*But they took their politics seriously  
And that night at the concert hall  
As the audience watched deliriously  
They had a free-for-all*

*Well, the one on the right was on the bottom  
And the one in the middle was on the top  
And the one on the left got a broken arm  
And the guy in the rear said, "Oh dear"*

I want you to vote! We all need to exercise our right to go to the ballot box and choose those that will lead us. I also want you to value those you have relationships with. You can hold different viewpoints from others and remain close. How do I know? The two individuals who had the most profound impact on my life are my parents – Huey and Martha. I was blessed to have outstanding parents! What some didn't know is that Huey and Martha held different political views. Huey voted Democrat and Martha voted Republican. Did they know they held different views? Of course they did, and when asked about it my Mom said this, "*we just cancel out each other's vote.*" After which her and my father laughed. My sister and I were nurtured, loved and cared for by our parents. You

see, my parents put their relationships with each other over anything that would divide them – including the “politics monster.” If they can do it, then what is our excuse?

I encourage you to make relationships a priority in your life! What better way to show that commitment than to serve those around us. Service to others is an outward expression of our commitment to relationships. Thank you for all you do in service to others! And remember, get out and vote, but don't let how you vote separate you from those you care for!

David

*“If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships - the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt*

*“We can improve our relationships with others by leaps and bounds if we become encouragers instead of critics.” - Joyce Meyer*

### **General Updates:**

#### **New Hires:**

Welcome to all our new hires:

Ashlyn Brooks hired for the position of Library Clerk on September 3<sup>rd</sup>

Isabelle VanNiekerk hired for the position of Part Time Receptionist on September 4<sup>th</sup>

Shailee Gilmore hired for the position of Telecommunicator on September 5<sup>th</sup>

Veronica Lupian-Soto hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on September 9<sup>th</sup>

Christian Batista hired for the position of Part Time Recreation Aide on September 11<sup>th</sup>

Lindsay McLaughlin hired for the position of Animal Services Officer on September 16<sup>th</sup>

#### **Promotions:**

Congratulations to all those promoted:

Justin Tanner Read promoted to Lieutenant on August 31<sup>st</sup>

Jason Moore promoted to Driver/Pump Operator on August 31<sup>st</sup>

Steven McClain promoted to Sergeant on September 14<sup>th</sup>

Lyndsey Amundson promoted to Employee Relations Manager on September 28<sup>th</sup>

**Awards/Accomplishments:**

Firefighter Logan Green graduated from Paramedic School and was recognized as Salutatorian

Firefighter Ernesto Rodarte graduated from Paramedic School

Firefighter Joshua Brown graduated from Honor Guard Academy

Firefighter Mark Mata graduated from Honor Guard Academy

**Sgt. Russell Dunagan Retires:** PD's Sgt. Russell (Rusty) Dunagan retired from the City on September 12. We wish Rusty all the best in his retirement!

**FD Participates in 9/11 Memorial Stair Climbs:** FD had six members participate in this year's 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb in Dallas and two members also participated in the San Antonio Climb.

**Blue Santa:** PD is accepting monetary and/or new bike donations for Blue Santa.

**August's Kudos Award Winners:** Congratulations to Julie Helsham and Rene Fernandez for being our September Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

**HH-N-GO:** The HH-N-GO bingo style challenge began on January 2. A new letter/number is 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. You can still get a card and play so contact HR if you want to play! This month saw two winners: Jazmyne Lee and Gage Genthner!

**August Challenge – Better Beverage:** The Better Beverage Challenge ended on August 30 and Julie Helsham was our challenge winner taking home a new blender!

**Fall Back into Fitness:** Fall Back into Fitness is the next health and wellness challenge. A juicer is the grand prize for the challenge winner. Contact HR for more information on this challenge.

**Family Day:** Thanks to all who attended Family Day on September 23 at Carl Levin Park!

**Fall Community Garage Sale:** The Fall Community Garage Sale will be held on Saturday, October 5 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**National Night Out:** National Night Out will be held October 1.

**Farmers Market:** The Market resumes on October 5 and will run every Saturday through December 21. Come on out to City Hall on Saturdays to get fresh produce and/or unique gifts.

**Dia de Muertos Festival:** Join the Harker Heights Parks and Recreation Department's Dia de Muertos Festival! Get ready to celebrate life, culture, and community at our annual event. This vibrant event is a unique opportunity to honor loved ones who have passed away while embracing the rich traditions of Mexican culture. The event will be held on Saturday, November 2, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Carl Levin Park.

#### **Spotlight on Service:**

**Heather Heilman Commended:** Library's Heather Heilman was commended by a patron for her extraordinary service during a stressful time. A local group of special needs adults is often brought to the Library for their instruction. During one visit, one of the students began to have seizures as they were leaving. Heather immediately saw the issues. While the instructor was calling 911 and working with the student, Heather organized staff to keep other patrons away from the area. She also gathered the other distressed students and spoke with them calmly to reassure them. Professional assistance came, and the student was transported to the hospital. The student continues now to be in good health. The following week or so the entire group, including the student who had been afflicted, returned. The instructor expressed appreciation for Heather's quick thinking, cool demeanor, and kind assistance.

**Angie Sabino is Incredible:** Library Executive Assistant Angie Sabino is an incredible asset for our City of Harker Heights. Library Director Lisa Youngblood wrote *“As a representative to the Arts Commission, she worked tirelessly (even conscripting family members) to help plan, organize, and implement the Art Commissions’ art experiences provided at the Chamber of Commerce Food, Wine, and Brew Fest. When they discovered issues with one of the planned activities, Angie immediately began researching to find solutions. Because of her determination and good will, the activities were enjoyed by attendees and commissioners alike. All this she did with a pleasant attitude and a true excitement for serving our community.”*

**Susan Crawley, Zully Reyes and Kelsey Coffman Get it Done:** Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee wrote to thank Susan Crawley, Zully Reyes and Kelsey Coffman for their help on the budget. Ayesha wrote, *“No portion, big or small, in assisting on the budget goes unnoticed by citizens or myself. For the assistance, input, data entry, and research you did in putting together the FY 2025 Budget . . . this kudos is for you. Thank y’all because I couldn’t do this without you.”*

**Ayesha Lealiiee and Finance Team Make a Difference:** Citizen Rick Keagle wrote to thank Finance Director Ayesha Lealiiee and the entire Finance Team. Mr. Keagle wrote, *“To you and your staff I want to say: “Thank You”. This year’s budget process and subsequent approval was probably the most complex that I’ve seen in the 30+ years as a resident of Harker Heights. Numerous changes over a very short period and you and staff were able to provide council and city leadership, as always, potential solutions to their concerns. Your dedication and attention to detail truly made a difference, and it didn’t go unnoticed. Getting the budget approved by leadership and Council is no small feat, and it’s a testament to your commitment and teamwork! I also want to thank you for how the budget was displayed on the city’s website – the new format was easy to view and navigate. Remarkable!”*

**Nathan Loris and Angel Rodriguez Take Pride:** A citizen wrote to thank the good work of Park’s Nathan Loris and Angel Rodriguez. The citizen wrote, *“I have been a resident in Harker Heights for over 30 years and I visit Community Park almost every day. Every time I come to the park, the guys that work there are always busy doing their job. You can tell that they take pride in what they do. I have a fond appreciation for all that they do to keep Community Park looking good. Please let them know how much I appreciate the good work they do.”*

**Tom Holubec Gets a Kudos:** Building Security Officer Clyde Hicks wrote to thank custodian Tom Holubec. Clyde wrote, *“I would like to give Tom some kudos. The way he approaches his job and his attention to detail in keeping City Hall clean is impeccable.”*

**Logan Green and Frank Conlee Provide Care:** FD’s Logan Green and Frank Conlee were thanked by a citizen for the care they provided for a family member in need.

**Kristina Roach Thanked:** Waste Management Operations specialist Rachael Decker wrote to show her appreciation for Public Works' Kristina Roach. Ms. Decker wrote, *"Thank you again for all the help you give us when it comes to assisting the citizens of Harker Heights."*

**Nate Trimble and Arno Stemmer are Fantastic:** A citizen called in to give their thanks for Public Works' Nate Trimble and Arno Stemmer for a water line repair they had done. The citizen stated that Nate and Arno were fantastic, worked hard and that they are special.

**Catharina Hoffman, Andrea Contreras, and Judge Potvin are Outstanding:** IT Director Gary Bates wrote to thank Courts' Catharina Hoffman, Andrea Contreras and Judge Potvin. Gary wrote, *"I wanted to pass on what an outstanding job our Municipal Court did in assisting the Pet Adoption Center last Saturday (September 28th, 2024). One of the City's Animal Service Officer's need to obtain a seizure warrant because of video evidence they received in regards to a puppy being mistreated by their owner. Specifically, I want to thank Andrea Contreras for coming in to assist with the paperwork for issuing the seizure warrant, Judge Garland Potvin for coming in to sign the warrant and Catherina Hoffman for providing oversight on what needed to be done and the court date for the seizure hearing. These individuals volunteered a portion of their weekend to assist an animal they we believed was in distress and in a bad situation. Additionally, I want to pass on my thanks to Ms. Leona Clay, for authorizing the overtime needed by Andrea for making this all happen. This speaks highly of the Municipal Court and their leadership. I truly appreciate their help. I passed on my thanks to each of these individuals on Saturday but wanted to make sure the leadership team knew that their dedication to service extends even to our four legged residents."*