

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

July 31, 2025

Message from the Manager:

What a great story of service you all write! This Message from the Manager was written by you!

Employee of the Quarter 3rd Quarter – Thomas Holubec

This committee voted for the selection of Tom Holubec, from the Parks and Recreation Department, for the Employee of the Quarter for the 1st Quarter of 2025. Tom's job can often be overlooked and thankless, but so many of us benefit from the work he does daily. Him doing his work makes it easier for us to do ours. He goes above and beyond when a department leans on him for assistance and always finds time to help a fellow employee when the need arises. More importantly, his presence is often appreciated the most when he is absent from work and suddenly, we notice all the little things that are usually just done and taken for granted. Tom is a hard worker, a friendly presence, and a valuable asset to the City of Harker Heights. It is without reservation that we select Tom for Employee of the Quarter.

Employee of the Quarter 4th Quarter – Lyndsey Amundson

With an incredible 19 years of dedicated service, Lyndsey embodies the true spirit of public service and community connection. Throughout her tenure, she has made lasting impacts across multiple departments—including Parks, Water, Finance, and now Human Resources—leaving behind a trail of excellence, compassion, and creativity. Her deep roots in the organization and community have made her a familiar and trusted face to residents and colleagues. Whether she's assisting walk-ins, answering calls, or supporting employees behind the scenes, she does so with genuine care and unwavering dedication. She is the driving force behind many of our employee appreciation events, often planning them herself with thoughtful, personal touches that bring people together. Her creative approach consistently enhances every workplace she's part of, and she exemplifies why the City of Harker Heights is such a special place to work and live. Even amid personal loss with the recent passing of a dear friend and colleague, she has remained a pillar of strength and grace—showing up every day with the same commitment and heart that defines her legacy. Her ability to support others while also leaning on the strength of her team is a testament to the unity she fosters and the respect she has earned. You are truly the heart of our city.

Service Pins:

*Through the following team members, we celebrated **240 years of service** to the City:*

Bambi Basinger – 5 years

Dustin Weaver - 5 years

Karry Fow - 5 years

Alyssa Schwindt – 5 years

Kaleb Sparkman – 5 years

Justin Read – 5 years

Nathan Elliot – 5 years

Heather Heilman – 5 years

Erica Rossmiller – 5 years

Crystal Thomas - 10 years

Shiloh Wester – 10 years

Sherill Carillo – 10 years

Yesmarie Burgos Figueroa – 15 years

Heather Jenks - 15 years

Damon Sprouse – 20 years

Clyde Hicks – 25 Years

Mark Hyde – 25 Years

Nichole Broemer – 25 Years

Leona Clay – 40 Years

Promotions:

Nichole Ratliff promoted to Accounts Payable Coordinator.

Nathaniel Trimble transferred to Utility Billing Clerk.

Louis Hill, promotion from Officer to Sergeant

Michael Beard was promoted to Director of Planning and Development/Building Official.

Stephanie Hall promoted to Senior Planner.

Richelle Otero promoted to City Planner.

Michelle Smart transferred to Planning Administrative Assistant.

Rodney Trantham promoted to the position of Senior Equipment Operator

Ashlyn Brooks was promoted to Executive Assistant

Achievements:

Finance Department achieved GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

Massoud Howayeck - Officer of the Year for 2024

Fabian Brooks achieved State Licensed Plumbing Inspector certification

Richelle Otero graduated from CTC

Stephanie Hall recently completed the TML leadership academy

Alex McCoy passed the ICC Residential Plumbing Inspector Exam in April

City Engineer Kristina Ramirez passed the mandatory TxDOT class for MPO grant projects with a score of 100!

Logan Green received Firefighter of the Year

Justin Elliott achieved Fire Officer II and Incident Safety Officer certifications

Jeremy Albright achieved Driver/Operator certification

Jason 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

Matt Hogan completed the Texas Fire Chief's Association Fire Chief's Academy

Joe Byrne Certificate of Completion in Emergency Management from Central Texas College

Recognized for We Hire Vets Employer Recognition 2025

Lyndsey Amundson recently completed the TML Leadership Academy

Ursula Paddie re-certified as Texas Registered Municipal Clerk

The City of Harker Heights was selected as a VETS Indexes Employer in the 2025 VETS Indexes Employer Awards!

Municipal Traffic Safety Award

New Hires:

Samirah Williams hired Telecommunicator

Alexis Fujikawa hired for Telecommunicator

Joshua Hidalgo hired for Telecommunicator

Joseph Varley hired for Police Officer

Luis Zelaya hired for Police Officer

Patrick Mays hired for Police Officer

Jonathan Rosado hired Water Maintenance Technician

Harry Sheppard hired for Water Service Worker

Lafayette Gardner hired for Wastewater Maintenance Technician

Kage Carmichael hired for Waster Service Worker

Daniel Carmichael hired for Drainage Light Equipment Operator

Leonardo Solis hired for Maintenance Tech - Wastewater

Vicente Fernandez hired as the position of Firefighter/Paramedic Trainee

Mason Heifner hired as Firefighter/EMT

Kaydence Palacios hired as Firefighter / EMT

Houston Johnson hired as Assistant to the City Manager

Kai-Tano Concepcion Duenas hired for the position of Parks Light Equipment Operator

Star Awards

1. **The Axolotl Award:** To the person for never hesitating to “axolotl” questions. - Gage Genther
2. **The Spicy Purrito Award:** To the person that is the first to try and pet the feral kittens - Loretta Harvey
3. **The Eager Enthusiast Award:** To the person who says “Yes!” before you even finish asking the question. Need someone to jump on a last-minute project? They’re already on it. Want to go for a coffee run at 3p.m.? They’re already halfway out the door. Their motto? “why say no when you can say YES!” – even if it means signing up for something completely random. - Kaily Funez-Lenon
4. **The Lumos Award:** To the person who arrives with her engaging smile and her super geeky knowledge Wizards, witches, and werewolves would run amuck if it were not for this Professor, her wily wit, and her handy wand. Always ready to apparate to Hogwarts whenever needed, she brings the magic whenever she is. Like all the best Hufflepuffs, she accepts all students and makes them feel wanted and welcome! Thanks for lighting our way! - Hal Alcorn
5. **The There you are Award:** For the person who tackles stacks and stacks of books, DVDs, Playaways, toys, and kits, kits, and more ridiculously complicated kits can’t hide all you do to get our materials to our patrons. When we need to rush a book for a story time emergency or a movie from another library whenever we need to move our online catalog to a new app this person is there! - Christina Link
6. **The Ironman Award:** For the person who consistently goes above and beyond, demonstrating a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence. He takes great pride and ownership in his work. - Quinton Amerson
7. **The Ironwoman Award:** For the person who is a go-getter. She demonstrates tremendous passion for her job. Always working hard with great resilience. - Tamara Gonzalez
8. **The Get It Done Award:** For the person who consistently demonstrates unmatched drive, focus, and execution. - Leslie Stevens
9. **The Taking Care of Business Award:** To the person who consistently steps up, takes charge, and delivers—no matter what’s thrown their way. - Jaime Davalos
10. **The Too Easy Award:** To the person who makes even the toughest tasks look effortless. - Pat Wilson

11. **The Interior Decorator Award:** To the person who has transformed his or her office into something out of HGTV. - Stephanie Hall
12. **The Wreck-it Ralph Award:** To the person that seems to break everything...even the expensive stuff. - Eric Moree
13. **The Most Fearless Fixer Award:** To the person who brings radios back to life by day and battling blazes by night! - Stuart Kiefer
14. **The People Whisper Award –** To the person who can calm down a customer like nobody's business with her calm voice and even tone. - Nichole Ratliff
15. **The Mission Impossible Award:** To the person who achieves the impossible, consistently tackling and completing challenging tasks that seem unattainable to others. - Erica Lozano
16. **The Wonka Award:** To the person who always brings sweets, regularly supplying the office with candy, chocolates, and other sugary delights. - Emily Wallace Sammons
17. **Top Dog In Rescue Award:** To the person who takes charge when others need help the most, saving the day and leading the way out of a crisis. - Shiloh Wester
18. **The Perimeter Protector Award –** To the person who keeps the watch, making sure that everything and everyone stays within safe boundaries. - Eugene Cuthbert
19. **You Made Me Mad Award** - For the judge who knows how to maintain control, even when defendants claim, 'You made me mad,' ensuring that everything stays focused on the facts. - Judge Billy Ray Hall

General Updates:

Open Enrollment: Mandatory open enrollment will begin on August 25th and end September 5th. We will have several in person opportunities to enroll and will also offer virtual enrollment at <https://ffbenefits.ffga.com/cityofharkerheights/>. We will provide dates and locations for in-person enrollment in the coming weeks.

New Hires:

Greg Geist – Police Officer Trainee on July 14th

Kevin Cruz Pacheco – Police Officer Trainee on July 14th

David Henderson – Police Officer Trainee on July 14th

Starrlyn Kindrick – Animal Services Officer on July 14th

Transfers:

Angela Sabino transferred to Human Resources on July 5th

Jonathan Del Toro transferred to Parks on July 19th

Promotions:

Kage Carmicheal promoted to Police Officer Trainee on July 14th

Donovan Martinez promoted to Crew Leader on July 19th

Accomplishments:

Calvin Fleming and Alex McCoy recognized with the 2025 Excellence in Code Enforcement Award

July Kudos Award Winners: Congratulations to Shiloh Wester, Kristina Ramirez, Angela Sabino, and Sonja Clay who were our July Kudos Award Winners! Wow, what great work you all do, and we have many, many more kudos winners coming up!

Pickleball Challenge: The Pickleball Challenge winners were: 1st Place Erica Lozano and Melissa Wolfe/Peter Quichocho, 2nd Place David Mitchell and Houston Johnson (Team Thundercats), and 3rd Place Melonie Matthewson and Lorissa Byse. While there were some sketchy ref decisions, Team Thundercats concedes that Erica and Melissa were just on their game better that day!

August Challenge – Gratitude Journal: The Gratitude Journal Challenge begins August 3 and runs to August 30. The challenge is an uplifting journey of gratitude during the month of August. For more information please reach out to HR.

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 July! You can't win if you don't play – join me (but you probably won't beat me)!

Scavenger Hunt: No winners for the Scavenger Hunt in the 2nd Quarter. For more clues see the City's Facebook page! One citizen wrote in to say what fun the scavenger hunt is and what a great way to get to know the City!

Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge: This month's Clyde and Gene's Crossword Challenge was about City trivia. The winners were Catharina Hoffman, Kailey Funez-Lenon, David Mitchell, Lyndsey Amundson, Kristina Roach, Lorissa Byse, and Houston Johnson! Winners were treated to a night at the musical play Anything Goes and a big thanks to Mayor Blomquist for that treat!

Harker Heights Farmers Market: The Harker Heights Farmers Market is closed for the summer and will reopen again from October 4 to December 6.

Spotlight on Service:

Trevor Jorgensen is Exceptional: A citizen wrote to the City to share their thanks for Planning's Trevor Jorgensen. The citizen wrote, *"I wanted to take a moment to thank you for always being patient and exceptionally explanatory with every question during my encounters with you. You are an amazing example of public service and I wanted to recognize you in your excellence!"*

Dan Phillips Provides Prompt Service: A representative from Oncor contacted the City to express their thanks for Planning's Dan Phillips. Oncor was coordinating with a resident of Harker Heights that resides in the ETJ for their billing statement, and there was confusion between Oncor and the resident regarding the home's physical address being Belton, and the electric utility bill showing Harker Heights. The Oncor rep wanted to express his gratitude to Dan for his quick response, and for providing clear information that resolved the misunderstanding between the resident and Oncor.

Kiarrah Carlisle Does Beautiful Work: HR's Lyndsey Amundson wrote to express her appreciation for Kiarrah Carlisle. Lyndsey stated, *"Can I give kudos to Kiarrah for this. She did a beautiful job updating this flyer and putting the disclaimer at the bottom."*

Public Works and FD are Loved: A citizen stopped by City Hall to share their thanks for assistance with storm debris damage and road repairs. The citizen thanked all who helped get brush out of her yard and to the street. A number of our FD team assisted with that effort! The citizen also wanted to thank Public Works for their prompt attention to some potholes she reported.

John Fox and Crew Thanked: A citizen wrote to thank Public Work's John Fox and crew. The citizen stated, *"Thanks to John Fox and rest of the road and signage crew, Mohican Trail in Harker Heights, Texas is in good repair and was done in a timely manner."*

Rene Fernandez is Great: Killeen Deputy Fire Chief Douglas Foster wrote to thank Rene Fernandez. Deputy Chief Foster wrote, *"I would like to pass on to the HH FD and City Administration the recognition and appreciation for Rene Fernandez' participation in CTC's College for Kids Junior Fire Academy this year. It was a bigger success than ever and due in no small part to the time volunteered by great people like Rene. The City of Harker Heights and Fire Department are very fortunate to count him as an asset."*

Dustin Weaver and Andrew Barnstable Are Excellent: A citizen called in to thank PD's Dustin Weaver and Andrew Barnstable for a job well done on a recent call they responded to.

Ayesha Lealiiee and Team Impress: At a recent Council meeting, Mayor Pro-tem Lynda Nash gave a kudos to Finance's Ayesha Lealiiee and her entire team for their good work on the City's financials.

Henry Nash Recognized: Mayor Blomquist gave a verbal kudos to Park's Henry Nash at a recent Council meeting.

Casey Brazzil and John Leivan Assist: City Engineer Kristina Ramirez wrote to thank Park's Casey Brazzil and John Leivan. Kristina wrote, *"My sincere thanks goes out to you and John for responding so quickly yesterday to my request. John's forward thinking and willingness to take time to make the repair to my file cabinet resulted in less down time and no need to relocate a replacement file cabinet to my office. I do appreciate you both."*

Ursula Paddie, Julie Helsham and Melonie Matthewson Jump Into Action: City Engineer Kristina Ramirez wrote to share her appreciation for Ursula Paddie, Julie Helsham and Melonie Matthewson. Kristina wrote, *"Thank you all for springing into action yesterday and assisting me when you could of just gone about your daily duties. Working with team members like you truly does make this a great place to work."*

Mark Hyde Impresses: A citizen stopped to share their thanks for ACM Mark Hyde. The citizen stated that Mark's work prevented accidents and was drastically needed and he wanted Mark to know how much he appreciated it.

FD and PD Are Invaluable: IT/Pet Adoption Director Gary Bates wrote to thank FD and PD for their recent assistance with an animal control issue. Gary wrote, *"I wanted to reach out and share my appreciation for the outstanding support provided by both the Police Department and the Fire Department during a recent animal welfare search and seizure operation conducted by our Animal Services Department. Thanks to the operational leadership of Commander Randy Stefek and the dedicated efforts of Lieutenant William Greenwood, Lieutenant Roxanne Harrill, Sergeant Lonnie Clark, Officer Joseph Varley, and Officer Trainee Ethan Quigley, the Police Department provided critical on-site security and operational assistance that ensured the safety of all personnel involved. Additionally, the*

Fire Department delivered excellent medical staging and on-scene support under the guidance of Battalion Chief Ray Gandara, Paramedic Joseph Byrne, and Paramedic Jordon Clopton. Their presence safeguarded the well-being of our employees throughout the operation. I also want to extend my sincere thanks to Chief of Police Betiale Hawkins for his support and for dedicating personnel and departmental assets to this effort. I'm equally grateful to Deputy Chief Sonja Clay and CID Commander Benjamin Duiker for their invaluable knowledge, guidance, and coordination throughout the planning and execution phases...This operation truly showcases the professionalism, preparedness, and compassion of our city's public safety teams. It's moments like these that remind me how fortunate we are to work alongside such dedicated colleagues. Please extend my gratitude to everyone involved for their exemplary service and continued commitment to public and animal welfare."

Pat Wilson is Professional: A citizen wrote to share their thanks for an encounter with Public Works' Pat Wilson. The citizen stated that Pat was *"very helpful and professional."*

Michael Beard and Code Enforcement Are Outstanding: Mayor Blomquist wrote to thank Planning Director/Building Official Michael Beard and the entire Code Enforcement team. The Mayor wrote, *"thank you and your code crew for addressing this issue for our community. I know your job is not generally the most pleasant having to enforce our municipal laws for our citizens but you and your code crew do an outstanding job and service to our City! Thank you and please pass along my thanks to your code crew for all that y'all do!"*

William Greenwood Guides: PD's Lt William Greenwood was thanked by Seton's Emergency Management Director, Elizbeth Zaragoza, for a recent training he provided. Ms. Zaragoza wrote, *"I wanted to express my sincere gratitude for the amazing training on Friday evening. We all benefitted from your guidance and help from your team. I also want to express my thanks for your offer to assist our security team with weapon qualifications and additional training offsite with your team."*