

HARKER HEIGHTS PROGRESS



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*COVER BY JONATHAN TUBBS

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Heights mayor: We have a great story to tell

Dear Residents,

This is my second opportunity to contribute to this annual publication for the city of Harker Heights.



Smith

My years of experience as mayor, city councilman, and as a member of the planning and zoning commission

have given me a wealth of knowledge about our city.

The vision which many have diligently worked to achieve through the years has been realized in the general betterment of our city.

The professional city staff in all departments toil daily to provide the services and quality of life which are deserved and expected by our residents.

The elected officials represent Harker Heights at numerous local activities and on a variety of boards and commissions at the municipal, county, and state level.

The citizen volunteers



HERALD | FILE

Mayor Spencer Smith, right, talks with James Anderson, retired chancellor of Central Texas College, at the dedication of the city's Anderson Arbors beautification project, which will line Knights Way with crepe myrtle trees.

dedicate thousands of hours in support of numerous programs for senior adults, the Stewart C. Meyer Public Library; the Pet Adoption Center; parks and recreation athletics, and citizens on patrol for example. Their efforts

enrich the lives of individuals and groups who call this place home.

Harker Heights is moving forward. We have a great story to tell. The positive attitude of those who provided solutions to challenges and worked

together in harmony have collectively contributed to establishing Harker Heights as the Bright Star of Central Texas.

Sincerely,
Spencer H. Smith
Mayor

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Police chief returns to his Central Texas roots

BY EMILY HILLEY-SIERZCHULA
HARKER HEIGHTS HERALD

Like many booming Central Texas cities, Harker Heights is going through changes, including at the helm of its police department.

Chief Phil Gadd took over the job after former Chief Mike Gentry retired at the end of April. Gadd has been with the department since being hired for the deputy police chief position in 2015.

The move to Harker Heights was a return to his Central Texas roots, Gadd said.

A Killeen native, Gadd began his law enforcement career as a Killeen Police Department officer; at 19 years old. After moving up through the KPD ranks, he joined the FBI and retired after 23 years.

Gentry was highly respected by members of the community, who got to know him well after 22 years with the Harker Heights Police Department. Gentry's career in law enforcement stretched more than 40 years.



EMILY HILLEY-SIERZCHULA | HERALD

Police chief Phil Gadd sits in his office at the Harker Heights police Department. He took over for longtime police Chief Mike Gentry who retired at the end of April.

Gadd said he plans on continuing all of Gentry's policies, but will concentrate on getting the department ready for the ongoing population increase and will use more technology than before.

Harker Heights is growing in population, with ever-increasing calls for service, but the department's manpower has barely budged over the years.

The department fielded around 45,000 calls for service in 2007 compared to about 60,000 calls ten years later, according to HHPD data.

"We need to increase our manpower to meet the needs of the community," Gadd said.

One of Gentry's priorities when he became the police chief in Harker Heights was to get the violent crimes rate down, which was an issue es-

"We need to increase our manpower to meet the needs of the community."

Police Chief Phil Gadd

pecially in the "bar district," Gentry said in March.

Gadd said the most prevalent crimes in the city now are theft and vehicle burglaries, which often are preventable.

"Just locking your doors would help tremendously," Gadd said. It's made all the worse if thieves find a garage door opener or a firearm in the vehicle.

The Harker Heights police chief said it's the community that brought him back to town.

"Texas is always proud, but Central Texas is especially family-oriented," he said. "We take care of each other, especially when we have military members who are deployed."



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HarkerHeightsTX

Remodeled fire station increases efficiency

BY BOB MASSEY

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

The newly renovated Harker Heights Central Fire Station on Indian Trail celebrated its grand opening on May 4, giving the city's fire department a roomier, more functional facility.

Harker Heights Fire Chief Paul Sims said the main differences in the newly remodeled fire station are numerous.

Sims said, "We have the room to spread our wings, so to speak, and not be falling over each other as we did in the station built in 1985. It has helped us to compartmentalize, organize and put things where we can effortlessly get to them."

"The new separation of administration and the operations side of the fire station gives the firefighters and paramedics a sense that this is the fire station side and if they have to do something with administration they can just come to us. We don't get in each other's way. We like that and they like that."

The renovations included a new kitchen, larger dining area, eight individual rooms for sleeping, four individual bathrooms, a brand new fitness center, and even a new television area with recliners. A study area that can be converted into an additional bedroom if needed gives the staff of the fire station the option to expand.

The changes have increased efficiency by creating additional areas of storage, which makes taking care of business more fluid as the staff goes about their days on duty.

"The newness of everything has transferred new thought processes into our men and women when its time to respond to a call. If they're in their dorms, it allows a natural flow to their ambulance or fire unit and on to the emergency," Sims said.

As they walk into the truck bay, firefighters see pertinent information about the call on a large television screen before they ever board their vehicles. That same information is on computers inside their units and on their cell phones.



HERALD | FILE

Residents walk through the newly remodeled central fire station during a dedication ceremony in May. The \$4 million renovation project gave the fire department more room and greater efficiency.

As of June 29, battalion chiefs have been added to the shifts. Captains have been renamed battalion chiefs and have been taken off the fire truck and put into a staff vehicle that allows them to respond as an incident commander on certain calls such as structure fires, major car accidents or wild land fires.

Firefighter/Paramedic Johnny Caraway has worked for the HHFD for a year and eight months after stints as a firefighter in Copperas Cove and Marble Falls.

"The new storage has made it possible for us to be better at what we do. It helps to know that we can find an item that we're looking for and that improves the quality of our work," Caraway said. "We used to sleep in one big room and now we have our own sleeping quarters. Personally, I like having that space."

Justin Lewis, a driver/operator at HHFD, has worked for the department for nine years and said, "It's better than it used to be, that's for sure. The old one, built in '85, was not made to handle a shift of 13 people. The update has provided us with our own rooms, lockers and the technology has made it much easier for us to do our jobs."

The new alarm system allows the crew to respond quickly because they know whether the call is either medical or fire. "Not only is our response time to a call

improved but our physical well-being is enhanced.

"We'll be more alert and ready to go," Lewis said.

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TROOPS

City manager: We help people chase their goals

Dear Harker Heights Residents, businesses and visitors:

What do you desire from your city? That was the question that the city recently posed to various groups in the city as part of a process we



Mitchell

call Exploring New Heights. No constraints were given, just a simple question of what you, our citizens,

desire. The input received in this process will help steer the city's efforts over the next few years.

It is truly an honor to serve you. It is our greatest desire to provide you with quality service. Our Vision Statement demands that of us: Providing public services that empower people to focus on what matters most — their goals, hopes and dreams.

We believe that by assisting our citizens in chasing their goals, hopes and dreams we get to be a part of their story and they in turn are part of ours. Great strides were made in our story over this past year.

Sidewalks, highlighted



HERALD | FILE

City Manager David Mitchell, left, thanks volunteers for their efforts during an appreciation reception in February.

strongly in Exploring New Heights, continue to be a priority for the city. The city recently completed the sidewalks along both sides of Amy Lane. Engineering for a sidewalk along Verna Lee Blvd from Indian Trail to Harker Heights High was just completed and is expected to be bid out in the near future.

Public safety was enhanced through the renovation of our Central Fire Station. Our Central Fire Station was originally constructed during the time frame when computers were not being utilized. This left a number of deficiencies

for the building as technology has grown more and more sophisticated. Quarters within the building had also become cramped and inefficient. The new expansion addressed the technology shortfalls and provides a roomier, efficient environment for our fire fighters. New technologies that protect fire fighter health were also installed.

The city nears completion of the expansion to the Pet Adoption Center. This expansion will give outdoor areas for cats and for puppies as well as a full surgical wing to assist with spay and neuter opera-

tions. How a city cares for lost and abandoned pets says a lot about the heart of a city.

In Harker Heights, we are proud to be the caretakers of these animals, giving them the best possible care and chance at happiness as they await that forever home.

The city has also continued to aggressively maintain our infrastructure. We have completed and have numerous ongoing road projects, water and sewer improvements, drainage projects, and parks improvements all in our effort to better serve you.

None of our success would have been possible without the support of our City Council, our amazing volunteers and our citizens. To my staff I say "thank you," for your can do spirit and hearts for service.

We encourage all citizens to get involved. Attend council meetings, participate in a board or commission or volunteer in other ways throughout the community. We are proud to support you as you pursue your quests in life.

Sincerely,
David Mitchell
City Manager

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Chamber works on branding, promotion of city

BY BOB MASSEY

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

With a membership of over 800, the Harker Heights Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center serves Central Texas with a plethora of services.

The chamber is involved in the community through business recruitment and retention, training, networking and promoting events that educate people about what Heights has to offer.

"For the last two years, we've concentrated on the tourism side of the house and not just for the chamber and its members," Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Gina Pence said. "We are about showing and sharing the story of branding our city."

Their priorities have become marketing and advertising efforts to promote the city.

Their branding, as it's referred to, is "Discover Harker Heights" and "Keeping it Local," Pence said,

"It has worked well and is the focus of all advertising in the media including television, newspaper, brochures, billboards and our website."

The Food, Wine and Brew Fest, scheduled for September, is also being featured again in Texas Monthly magazine.

The branding is also seen in the Texas State Travel Guide, the Fort Hood Telephone Directory, Killeen Daily Herald Newcomers Guide and Texas Highways.

Posters are located at the Killeen/Fort Hood Regional Airport and there is also a



HERALD FILE

Visitors to the Food, Wine and Brew Fest receive their wristbands during last year's festival, which is the Chamber of Commerce's biggest annual event.

Their branding, as it's referred to, is "Discover Harker Heights" and "Keeping it Local," Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Gina Pence said, "It has worked well and is the focus of all advertising in the media including television, newspaper, brochures, billboards and our website."

"Discover Harker Heights" website.

"Discover Harker Heights" also provides us an opportunity to highlight Heights Parks and Recreation and all that they offer plus the Farmers Market at Seton Medical Center," Pence said.

The regional "Destination Central Texas" website also features the chamber's new branding.

It is a cohesive group that brings conferences, major events, day-trippers and their overnight stays to the area.

"That means they stay in our hotels and dine in our restaurants," Pence said.

Dinosaur George will return for a repeat perfor-

mance in 2019.

The major event in 2018 will again be the annual Food Wine and Brew Fest with an expected 7,000 people in attendance at the Harker Heights Community Park, 1501 E. Farm-to-Market 2410.

The chairperson of the event, Jennifer McCann, said, "H-E-B is again a major sponsor."

The festival is featured on all shelves and you can buy a ticket to the event at any H-E-B in the state of Texas.

McCann said, "They've been wonderful partners. I don't know of many stores that would shelve wines from a local city festival."

The festival will offer a

promenade of beverages and culinary delights to be sampled and purchased by visitors from Harker Heights, Killeen, Fort Hood, Temple, Austin, Copperas Cove, Waco and Georgetown.

"Our after-action report from last year indicates people came from all over Texas, especially the Dallas/Fort Worth area and from California and New York," McCann said.

Live music will be featured all day. The star events will be The Battle of the Bands featuring local musicians and a Local Chefs Competition.

For more information about the Fest, contact the chamber at www.hhchamber.com or call 254-699-4999.

The internet site for festival tickets will be:

www.hhfoodandwine.com.

In addition to the festival, the chamber has reached out to the community by offering seminars including: Being Prepared for Live Shooter Events and the Live2Lead Leader Development Experience.

The 24th Annual Chamber Golf Tournament also drew a large number of golf enthusiasts.

The chamber operates under the oversight of the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors consisting of leaders: Dr. Jim Anderson, chairman; Ryan Shahan, vice chairman; Jim McKinnon, past chair; Tony Mino, treasurer; and directors: E.T. Farris, Luke Potts, Andy Bass, Richard Bean, Eva Keagle, Zach Dietze, Annmarie McKenna, Kenda Pacheco, Sam Halabi and Dr. Karen Clos.

Growth continues at modest rate in Heights

BY BOB MASSEY

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

After surpassing 30,000 residents last year, Harker Heights continues to grow, but at a modest rate.

At the time of the city's founding, it had 600 residents living on 950 acres. Today, Heights has grown to more than 9,000 acres.

"That number of residents will continue to grow and it seems that houses are being bought just as soon as they're being finished," said Courtney Peres, senior planner for the City of Harker Heights.

Peres said the Tuscan Meadows subdivision is close to being completed, with Evergreen Estates falling close behind. Other residential construction is winding down including Grover-Whitten, Cedar Brook Ridge and Stonewall Ridge. "That will be a total of about 500 homes," said Peres.

"Regardless of the future outlook, our growth has been flat for this calendar year," said Director of Planning and Development Joseph Molis. It has hovered near the 30,000 mark but has stayed there, he said.

"Further down the line, we'll continue to see an increase, but we are momentarily stalled while the new subdivisions reach their full potential," Molis said.

What affects population growth more than anything else in Harker Heights is the cost of land. Heights has always been an ideal location for residential growth but the city is beginning to run out of large tracts of land that



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

A sign heralds a new Harker Heights development, Cedar Brook Ridge, located near Nola Ruth Boulevard and Old Nolanville Road. Homebuilding continued during the past year, but at a more modest pace than in past years.

are easily developed. Molis said, "We're getting into more challenging pieces of property."

Cedar Brook Ridge is the last large tract of land available. It's nestled in an area between Stillhouse Lake Road and Cedar Knob Road.

"What is really going to attract builders is that we have a regional draw of people who want to live in Harker Heights, but what's going to happen is they will have to deal with more challenging pieces of property in the eastern side of the city," Molis said. "The hilly landscape will begin to be an issue."

What the city has done is build a sewer interceptor that goes to the Rumble Road Lift Station and then connects back to the city and built stub outs where the natural sewer basins would be on the south side of Farm-

to-Market 2410.

It will open up areas for more dense residential development but what has to happen is people selling their property in addition to developers looking at consolidating several pieces of land which makes it more difficult when you're dealing with multiple property owners.

"We're starting to hear where the interest lies. There's a 100-acre tract of land that we know of that several people want to acquire and develop," Molis said.

Planning for residential growth is a cooperative effort of Molis, Peres and recently hired GIS analyst Dan Phillips.

Molis is in charge of planning, code enforcement and building officials. Peres is involved in long-range planning, revamping ordinances,

and the multi-modal transportation plan. Phillips is the city expert in map drawing using GIS.

Peres said, "I always instruct people who come to our counter and ensure they do their due diligence. Sometimes they are just uninformed on some of our policies and we can't blame them because of the transient nature of this area. Their move to Harker Heights would be much smoother if they come to see us first. We've implemented a policy that makes it mandatory for them to attend a pre-development meeting that gets all the kinks ironed out and all questions answered."

Molis said, "As for the core of the city, we have developed a new zoning district, called R1-I (Single Family Infill

PLEASE SEE **GROWTH**, 9

Growth

FROM PAGE 8

Dwelling District). This new class of residential zoning is designed to allow development on the historically smaller lots in the older parts of town, encourage the construction of starter homes, and allow more residents to have the option of home ownership. We have seen a few of these new residential units constructed on the east side of Harker Heights, but there is some potential for construction appearing on the north side as well.”

City staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission are still looking at the revitalization of Veterans Memorial Boulevard.

“It is a complex issue but they are progressing towards creating a zoning overlay district, whose goal is to encourage more commercial development in the area while creating a pleasant aesthetic standard,” Molls said.

Last year, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a workshop to discuss the vision of the Veterans Memorial Boulevard Corridor; and invited representative of the cities of Nolanville and Killeen in the hopes of creating a holistic vision for the corridor; or at the very least, inform them of our plans for it.

Both cities had representatives present, and all felt that a regional approach would benefit all communities, and a good first step was taken for an open dialogue about the future of the area.

Construction moves forward on FM 2410

BY BOB MASSEY
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

The sidewalk and turn lane reconstruction has almost been completed just to the south of where Farm-to-Market 2410 / Knight's Way connects with the bridge over Interstate 14.

New sidewalks have been installed from Taco Bueno to the new turn lane in front of Starbucks.

In addition, a right-turn lane is in place at Commercial Drive with a second one connecting FM 2410 to the Interstate 14 feeder road eastbound in front of National Tire and Battery and Popeye's.

“This has been a TxDOT project run by TTG Utility but is not connected to the widening and reconstruction of Interstate 14,” said Harker Heights City Manager David Mitchell.

Mark Hyde, director of public works, said there has also been construction work on the west side of FM 2410, near Extraco Bank.

“They have done some work along the Commercial Drive area of the street. They've widened the road, taken out an island and are making other modifications,” Hyde said.

Yet to come is completion of the widening of FM 2410 from the north side of the bridge to Roy Reynolds Drive.

Funding for the project has been ongoing for many years. The Killeen/Temple Metropolitan Planning Organization sets the priority of projects and the FM 2410 widening into Killeen has



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

Work crews move dirt and level ground on Farm-to-Market 2410, in preparation for paving work. The project's completion is expected in summer 2019.

The scope of the project is to widen FM 2410 from the Killeen city limits to Commercial Drive in Harker Heights. It will include five lanes with a center left-turn lane, curb and underground storm sewer and sidewalks.

been on the books for quite some time, but the funding was never there, Hyde said.

Hyde said Killeen decided to do what is called a pass-through project on its side.

“The way that works is that the city funds the project and then they're reimbursed for the next few years based on traffic counts,” Hyde said.

The city of Harker Heights

decided not to do that and the funding became available and is being constructed with Texas Department of Transportation dollars.

The scope of the project is to widen FM 2410 from the Killeen city limits to Commercial Drive in Harker Heights. It will include five lanes with a center left-turn lane, curb and underground storm sewer and sidewalks.

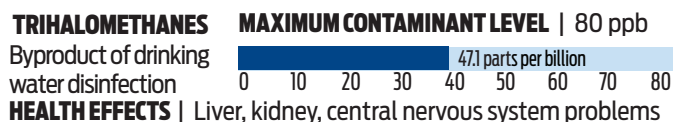
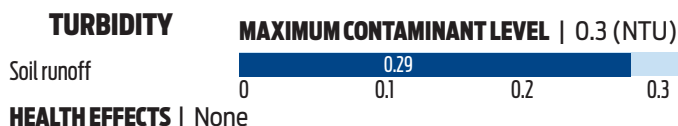
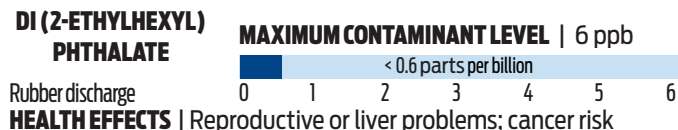
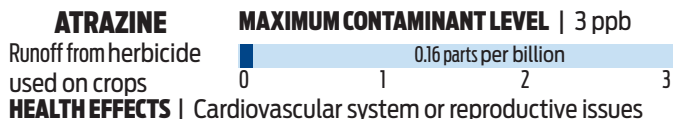
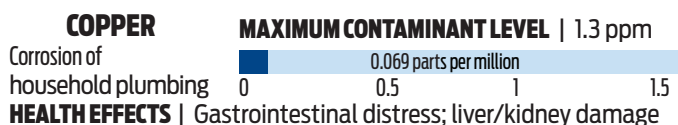
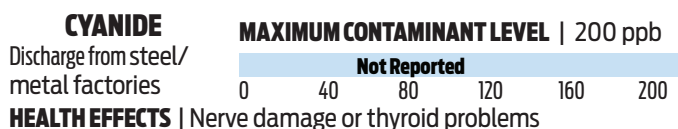
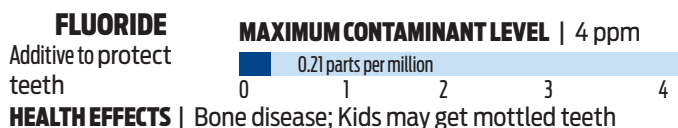
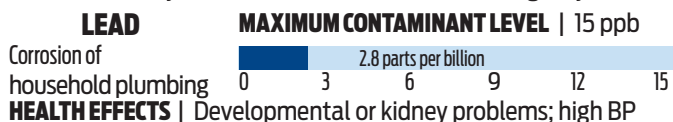
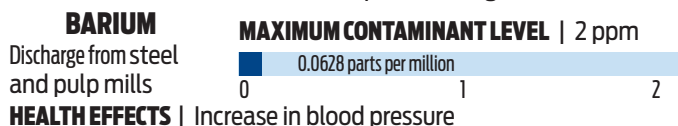
Hyde said, “They've been working on it now since January 2017. It's been set as a 617-working day project. The completion date is the summer of 2019.”

Sound walls will also be built from Redwood Drive to Redwood Circle on the north side with the other one from Highland Oaks to Roy Reynolds.

“In December 2013, TxDOT had a workshop with the residents who would be affected by the wall and all 13 of them affirmed that part of the project,” Hyde said.

SET LIMITS FOR CONTAMINANTS – HARKER HEIGHTS

Levels of common substances in Kempner drinking water and their maximum limits set by the U.S. Environment Protection Agency:



Heights scores high on annual drinking water reports

HERALD STAFF REPORT

With a few exceptions, area water providers received clean report cards for monthly tests of chemical and organic compounds mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act.

The Harker Heights annual report was said to meet or exceed all federal water regulations, and made for what was called a good report by Public Works Director Mark Hyde.

Of note, the city's turbidity was relatively high — approaching the maximum limit — but still met standards.

Hyde said a “variety of things” might be the reason for the high levels, but did not provide a specific cause.

Bell County Water Control and Improvement District No. 3, which provides water to the city of Nolanville, and the city of Gatesville were cited for violating sampling and reporting regulations.

According to its annual report, WCID No. 3 was cited for failing to conduct routine monitoring of total coliform during May.

“We failed to test our drinking water for the contaminant and period indicated,” the district said in its report. “Because of this failure, we cannot be sure

of the quality of our drinking water during the period indicated.”

The failure occurred because of “unintentionally miscounted” samples taken in that month.

The list of cities and water providers that received no violations under state and federal clean water regulations in 2017 include:

- Killeen
- Belton
- Bell County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1
- Copperas Cove
- Lampasas

The water quality reports sent to customers each year are mandated under the

TCEQ's and EPA's Consumer Confidence Report program. The quality updates are self-reported, with most water service providers posting the information online. Failure to issue a report can result in a TCEQ violation.

Tests mandated under federal Environmental Protection Agency standards include monitoring for organic and inorganic contaminants, residual disinfectant levels, lead and copper, and adequate filtration.

Lead and copper tests are required to be performed once every three years.

PLEASE SEE **WATER**, 11

Water

FROM PAGE 10

The majority of area customers are supplied by the Bell County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1, which draws and treats surface water from Belton Lake. The district is currently in the construction stage of a water treatment plant on the south shore of Stillhouse Hollow Lake that is scheduled to go online in spring 2020.

The district's quality report showed no violations for 2017 chemical and organic compound tests.

As a regional water supplier, the district operates its own system of water treatment and distribution to area customers.

Cities including Killeen, Cove, Belton, Heights and entities such as Bell County WCID No. 3 tap into that regional system for utility connections and storage and are allowed to test the district's lines and infrastructure on a regular basis.

The district does not supply water to Gatesville, Lampasas, the Kempner Water Supply Corporation or Florence.

Kempner WSC draws its own surface water from an intake and treatment plant on Stillhouse Hollow Lake and supplies the cities of Kempner and Lampasas. The corporation, as well as the city of Belton, also buy water from the Central Texas Water Supply Corporation, which draws its water from Stillhouse Hollow Lake.

Gatesville gets its water from the Gatesville Regional Water Supply.



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

Cars on I-14 drive between the concrete barricades erected during the ongoing construction project. The project will widen the highway to three lanes in each direction from Seton Medical Center to Indian Trail.

Phase 1 of I-14 construction project begins

BY BOB MASSEY
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Harker Heights-area motorists are seeing evidence that construction is beginning to widen U.S. Highway 190 / Interstate 14.

Phase 1 of the transition to multiple lanes of traffic will support Interstate 14 from the Harker Heights city limits at Seton Medical Center to just west of the Indian Trail overpass.

The Texas Department of Transportation says the ultimate scope of Interstate 14

will encompass the roadway to Simmons Road in Belton.

Harker Heights City Manager David Mitchell said, "Work on Highway 190 will be one mile east of 2410 to Simmons Road, just above Nolanville Hill."

In Harker Heights, the existing lanes along the I-14 route have already been altered with the installation of concrete barriers.

TxDOT spokesperson Ken Roberts said a third lane within the existing median will be going toward the inside.

"This will create a difficult

situation for travelers, but the outside lanes will provide a safe passageway during the construction period," Roberts said.

Spot construction is already underway along the interstate from Harker Heights to Nolanville. Nighttime work is closing down a section of the right lane to the east of the Nola Ruth overpass in addition to other overnight closures.

An update of the project will be presented to the public by TxDOT during the month of August.

Heights focuses on infrastructure projects

BY BOB MASSEY

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

The City of Harker Heights continues to focus on critical city infrastructure. Work on many miles of streets, drainage infrastructure and water and sewer lines has been completed.

To ensure that streets are properly maintained, the City Council has committed \$3 million in bond monies to certain road improvements being completed in 2018 and 2019.

Those projects include:

- Oakridge Boulevard/Valley Oaks intersection repairs
- Verna Lee Boulevard (to include a sidewalk along the eastside of the roadway)
- Wampus Drive
- Aztec Trace (from Ute to Osage)

- Boulder Run
- Forest Circle (from South Roy Reynolds to Moody)
- Moody Circle and Clore Road (from Amy Lane to Indian Trail).

• “All of the road projects in this bond issuance are reconstruction projects resulting in completely rebuilt roadways,” said David Mitchell, city manager of Harker Heights.

Also completed are projects at Lakota/Ponderosa Drive, Oakwood Drive and the cul-de-sac in Elmwood Circle

FM 3481 LEFT-TURN LANE IMPROVEMENTS AT GOMER LANE, SUMMER GLEN, FULLER LANE AND DEL REY DRIVE

The project includes constructing a left-turn lane on FM 3481 for Gomer Lane, Summer Glen, Fuller Lane



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

The city erected a new retaining wall along Mountain Lion Road, replacing a wooden structure that was failing.

and Del Rey Drive.

According to TxDOT, the intersection at FM 3481/Fuller Lane did not meet the warrant requirements for a traffic signal light.

The city will enter into an Advance Funding Agreement with Texas Department of Transportation for the left-turn lane project.

The city of Harker Heights has requested TxDOT to provide the engineering design for the project with the city funding the construction cost.

TRAFFIC ROUNDABOUT AT COMMERCIAL DRIVE & HEIGHTS DRIVE

This project includes constructing a one-lane traffic roundabout at the intersection of Commercial Drive and Heights Drive to reduce

the traffic congestion on Commercial Drive.

The city has been awarded Category 7 funding from the Texas Department of Transportation for construction of the project. Category 7 projects are selected by the Killeen-Temple Metropolitan Planning Organization with consultation from the Texas Department of Transportation.

The city finalized negotiations with the Wal-Mart Super Center for the additional right of way required for the project, and an \$849,131 contract with TTG Utilities LP for construction of the project was approved last month by the City Council.

Work on the roundabout is expected to start at the end of July, with completion scheduled near the end of the year.

2015 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The City of Harker Heights received a Community Development Block Grant for this project in the amount of \$275,000; the city was required to contribute \$55,000 from the Capital Improvement Funds for the CDBG projects.

The city also included additional wastewater rehabilitation projects to be funded from the FY 2015-16 Capital Improvement Funds.

The project is substantially completed.

MAJOR DRAINAGE PROJECT

The city recently bid out the construction of a drainage project in the north area of town.



PHOTOS BY MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

The city will soon begin work on a roundabout traffic circle at the intersection of Heights and Commercial drives to reduce congestion.

Phase 1 of project will widen and install concrete and culverts in a drainage basin from around Clore Road to downstream of Beeline Road.

Phase 2 is under engineering for construction in the next fiscal year and will tie into covering improvements from Beeline Road to Robin.

GRAVITY SEWER MAIN EXTENSION

The extension will provide wastewater service to the new KISD middle school on Warrior's Path. Construction will begin in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

This will not only provide wastewater service to the new school. It will also allow the city to take other sewer lift stations off line and utilize this line for gravity flow.

CITY WIDE SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND DATA ACQUISITION SYSTEM UPGRADE PROJECT

The project includes installing SCADA telemetry to 10 lift stations and alarm monitoring for critical areas at the wastewater treatment plant including the UV disin-

fection system, air blowers, raw water pumps, dry well high-water alarms and plant flow rates.

Currently, the 10 lift stations are monitored by autodialers or web based telemetry. The city has a master SCADA system serving the water distribution system and the Trimmer Creek Lift Station. All of the upgrades will be served by the existing master SCADA system.

In addition to the increased monitoring capabilities, the SCADA improvements will eliminate telephone line and web based monthly fees for the 10 lift stations. The project is substantially completed.

BIRCHWOOD DRIVE WATER MAIN EXTENSION PROJECT

A 6-inch diameter water line on Birchwood Drive replaced the existing 3-inch water line. One new fire hydrant was also installed.

WATER STORAGE TANK REHABILITATION PROJECT

This project included cleaning, sandblasting and recoat the inside and outside of the Cedar Oaks 1 MG Stand Pipe,



A construction crew works on building a wheelchair-accessible sidewalk on Farm-to-Market 2410/Knights Way, just west of Central Texas Expressway.

Cedar Knob 100K Ground Storage Tank, Verna Lee Ground Storage Tank 1.5 MG (Inside Only) and the Evergreen 150 K Elevated Tank (Spot repair only).

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOW INITIATIVE FLOW MONITORING AND FINAL REPORT

The city of Harker Heights has completed the 10-year Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Initiative agreement with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

This project is the follow-up flow monitoring of the city's 18 sanitary sewer basins and submission of the final report to the TCEQ outlining the inflow-infiltration reduction results from the 10 years of sanitary sewer rehabilitation projects.

The city recognizes increased flows in the sanitary sewer collection system during heavy rain events. The objective of the 10-year program was to "tighten up" the sanitary sewer collection system to reduce storm water

from entering the system.

The goal is to reduce storm water related sanitary sewer overflows and to reduce storm water flow to our wastewater treatment plant.

Based on the results of the 2006 system study, defective manholes were the leading cause of storm water entry followed closely by private sanitary sewer service line defects.

WATER REPORT

The Heights City Council was recently presented with a Water Plan through 2040. City Manager David Mitchell said, "Most cities have master plans for the major projects such as water and wastewater and drainage.

There are many plans to guide us through major infrastructure projects."

The water plan projects there to be 45,000 residents in the City of Harker Heights at the time.

Otto Wiederhold with Walker Partners used a sophisticated computer model.

According to Mitchell, "They put monitors on spikes that records what current pressures are at certain times of the year."

Slow growth continues for housing sales

BY ARTIE PHILLIPS
HARKER HEIGHTS HERALD

The housing trend that began in 2017 has continued into 2018, with overall development slowing as available lots are quickly being snatched up and built upon.

“There has been a bit of a decline (in residential growth) since 2016, and that’s not really because of a lack of demand, but a lack of supply,” city manager David Mitchell said. “We had 156 (housing) permits last calendar year (2017 to 2018) and our last big year for housing permits was 2015 when we had 211 permits.”

Currently, housing developers in the city are working on Cedarbrook Ridge, a subdivision located off of Stillhouse Lake Road. While the subdivision is not open yet, Contractor D. R. Horton is advertising new lots as they go up.

“After Cedarbrook Ridge there is not really a subdivision waiting to be developed,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell said once houses are finished being built at Cedarbrook Ridge it will be time for developers and city planners to begin looking at where new developments should go.

Despite the slowdown of development and the limited housing plots in the city, Mitchell said the current rate of growth is right on track for the city’s estimates.

“We are right where we expected to be by this point,” Mitchell said. “Also, once Cedarbrook Ridge opens this year I think we will beat 2017’s numbers for housing sales.”

In addition to new single-



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

New homes are under construction in the Tuscany Meadows subdivision in Harker Heights.

“There has been a bit of a decline (in residential growth) since 2016, and that’s not really because of a lack of demand, but a lack of supply,”

City Manager David Mitchell

family housing units, Harker Heights has also recently increased its offer of multi-family units, namely with the addition of the Stillhouse Flats apartment complex.

Stillhouse Flats opened last year and offers a total of 96 apartment units for rent. The complex is located at 2926 Cedar Knob Road.

Harker Heights Housing Report

June 2018



Median price

\$215,000

Up **3.6%**

Compared to June 2017

Price Distribution

\$0 - \$99,999	2.0%
\$100,000 - \$199,999	41.2%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	47.1%
\$300,000 - \$399,999	5.9%
\$400,000 - \$499,999	2.0%
\$500,000 - \$749,999	2.0%
\$750,000 - \$999,999	0.0%
\$1,000,000+	0.0%



Active listings

Down **40.5%**

119 in June 2018



Closed sales

Down **17.2%**

53 in June 2018



Days on market

Days on market	54
Days to close	40
Total	94

6 days less than June 2017



Months of inventory

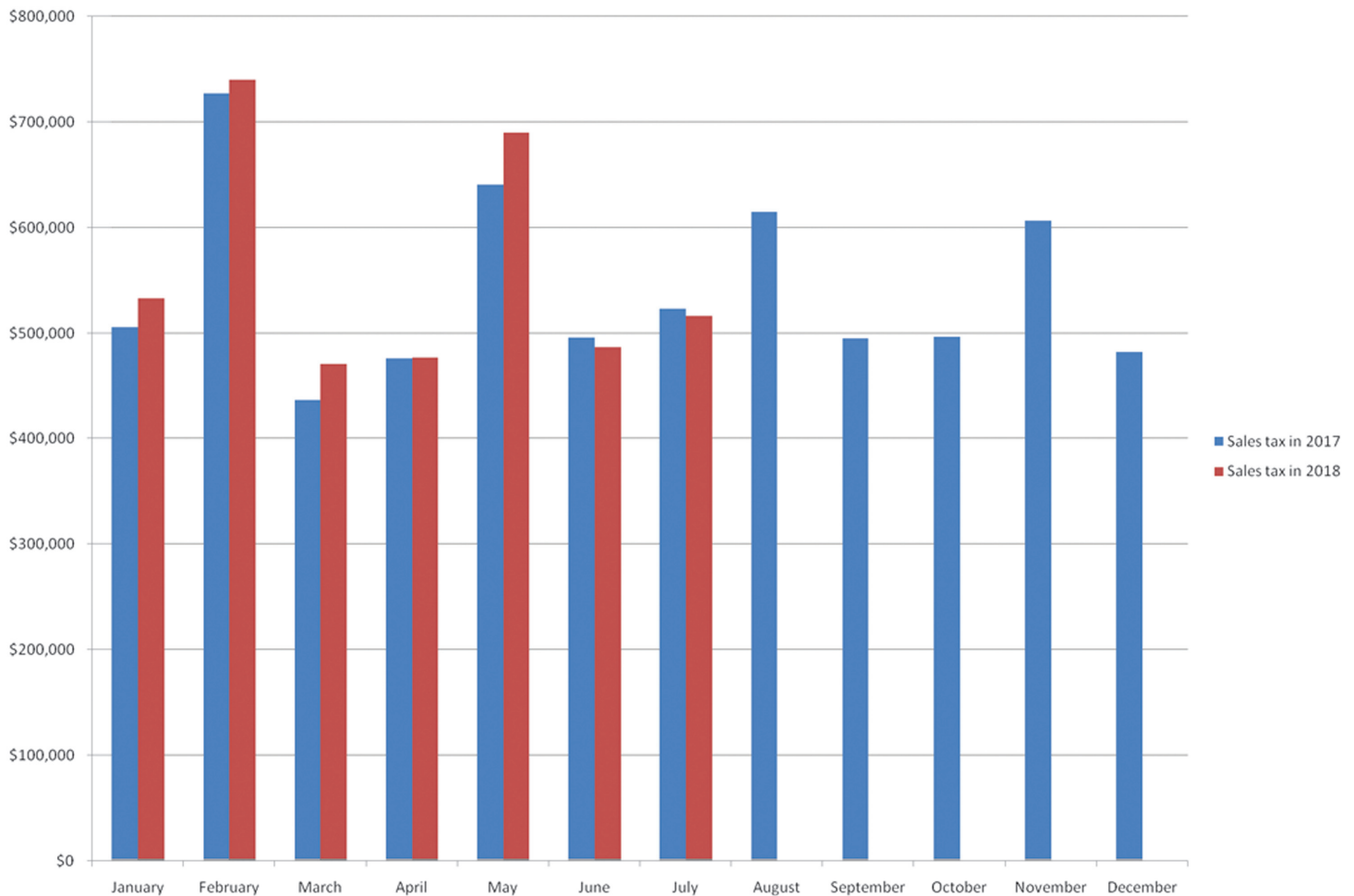
2.9

Compared to 4.5 in June 2017

About the data used in this report
Data used in this report comes from the Texas REALTOR® Data Relevance Project, a partnership among the Texas Association of REALTORS® and local REALTOR® associations throughout the state. Analysis is provided through a research agreement with the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University.

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SOURCE: CITY OF HARKER HEIGHTS | GRAPHIC BY ARTIE PHILLIPS

Sales tax revenue up slightly from last year

BY ARTIE PHILLIPS
HARKER HEIGHTS HERALD

The city of Harker Heights has collected a little more than \$3.9 million in sales tax so far since the start of 2018, which amounts to \$108,682 more sales tax revenue than this time last year. This is a 2.85 percent increase from last year's sales tax revenue.

"We have been forecasting our sales tax to be fairly flat this past year," City Manager David Mitchell said. "When you have big development come in, you get a big bump in sales tax for at least a year, and then it levels off

after about a year."

Mitchell said that because of that, sales tax figures tend to jump in fits and starts rather than moving fluidly. He said small businesses tend to divert sales tax figures rather than drawing in new sources of revenue.

"When you get something big like Wal-Mart, that tends to bring in new sales tax, but if a small business like a restaurant opens up, that just tends to draw customers from some other business who want to try it out, so overall sales tax tends to stay the same."

Month-by-month sales tax

revenue allocations in 2018 show increases in the \$1,000 to \$30,000 range compared to correlating months in 2017.

In January the city of Harker Heights received \$532,791, a 5.44 percent increase from January 2017.

The city also saw a slight increase in sales tax in February. Harker Heights received \$739,715, a 1.71 percent increase from February 2017.

The trend of increasing sales tax allocations continued in March, when Harker Heights received \$470,373, a 7.81 percent increase from last year.

In April, Harker Heights received \$476,845, a 0.21 percent increase from April 2017.

In May, sales tax allocations continued to climb, with Harker Heights receiving \$689,872, a 7.75 percent increase from May 2017.

The city saw its first sales tax percentage decrease of the year in June, when Harker Heights received \$486,338, a 1.9 percent decrease from June 2017.

July also saw a sales tax percent decrease, as Harker Heights received \$516,202, a 1.24 percent decrease from July 2017.

Plenty of new businesses open up in new, existing locations

BY ARTIE PHILLIPS
HARKER HEIGHTS HERALD

New businesses have been exploding onto the scene in Harker Heights in the past year, and more continue to come to the area all the time.

While only 12 new businesses have received permits for new construction since July 2017, many more businesses are opening new doors at existing locations.

From June 2017 to June 2018, 12 new businesses submitted permits for new construction in the city, worth a total value of \$3.54 million.

“There is a lot to be excited about on the commercial front,” city manager David Mitchell said. “The demand is there right now for restaurants and service businesses.”

One of the newest businesses set to come to Harker Heights is Raising Cane’s, a Louisiana-based fried chicken restaurant chain that specializes in chicken finger meals.

With a permit valuation of \$1.4 million, the business will be at 335 Knights Way, just south of Central Texas Expressway, near Taco Bueno.

Another new restaurant coming to Harker Heights is Burger King to the permit reports issued by the city. A permit was issued last week worth \$1.1 million with the owner listed as Ampler Burgers. Ampler Burgers is the branch of the Ampler Restaurant Group that manages Burger King franchises in Texas. The new restaurant will be at 680 E. Knights Way.

“Retail Coach (the company the city employees to help bring business to Harker



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

Hamden Properties, located at 105 E. Farm-to-Market 2410, opened its doors earlier this year. The location also serves as the offices for Flintrock Builders.

Heights) has told us there is a lot of chatter about restaurants wanting to come to Heights,” Mitchell said.

Restaurants are not the only businesses with plans to come to Harker Heights. Some businesses that have already opened in the past year include gyms, doctor’s offices, shopping centers and spas.

One business, Vitalogy Skincare, has had offices in Harker Heights since 2014, but recently decided an upgrade to a larger building was necessary.

Vitalogy Skincare celebrated its grand opening and ribbon cutting on Nov. 7 at its larger, renovated clinic located at 300 E. Farm-to-Market 2410, Suite 109.

The city also has a new business that helps turn kitchen trash into treasure.

The Green Plant is a composting business that

allows users to take items like coffee grounds, egg shells and vegetable waste, put them in a bucket for pick-up, and receive points for each pound of compost they donate. The points can then be redeemed at other local businesses for a discount on products and services.

So far, The Green Plant has partnered with Christy’s Lawn Care, Slice of Heaven, which sells goat milk and handmade soaps and lotions, and is working on developing relationships with Hidden Falls Nursery and Garden Center, plus So Natural Organic Restaurant & Market.

LIST OF NEW BUSINESSES SINCE JULY 2017

(BASED ON CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY
ISSUED BY CITY OF HARKER HEIGHTS)
**For I’m Not Ashamed
Ministries**
105 Cox Drive

Speed Pool & Game
706 Edwards Drive
Lone Star Circle of Care
775 Indian Trail
Revolution Web Studios
901 S. Amy Lane
Flintrock Builders
105 E. FM 2410
Heart of a Servant
217 W. Arlo Road, Unit B
Arepitas USA
360 W. Central Texas Expressway
Harker Heights Properties
326 Morgan St., Suite B1
Massage Therapy by Trisha
326 Morgan St., B3
The Home Town Group
326 Morgan St.
Prime Lending, Inc.
440 E. CTE
Professional Office Suites
600 Indian Trail, 205, 206
Hill’s Auto Repair
512 E. Veterans Memorial Boulevard
Harker Heights Chamber of Commerce



MIKE BARTOSZEK | HERALD

Arepita's restaurant opened at 360 W. Central Texas Expressway last fall.

552 FM 2410

Range of Motion

127 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Allegiance Solar, LLC

903 S. Amy Lane

Precious Ones Learning Center

1306 Indian Trail

Harker Heights Massage

2330 Verna Lee Blvd.

Keep in Touch Massage Therapy

326 Morgan St, Ste B

Stacy's Barber Shop

102 Veterans Memorial Blvd.

T's Tasty Kitchen

225 Cox Drive

MJ Kitchen

1100 E. FM 2410

Rock Solid Health

220-B Commercial Drive

A-Z Daycare

2330 Verna Lee Blvd.

Top Value Storage

1174 S. Amy Lane

Will Call Bar & Grill

302 W. Veterans Memorial Boulevard

Baylor Scott & White

326 Morgan Street

Club Level

201 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Knights Family Dentistry

980 Knight's Way

Dr. Bubba's Tasty Kitchen

225 Cox Drive

Liberty Tax Service

600 Indian Trail

Dominos Pizza

200 W. CTE

Sylvan Learning

440 E. CTE

American Veterans Motorcycle Club

539 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Casa de Oracion la Nueva Jerusalem

107 E. Mockingbird Lane

Q Massage

108 E. FM 2410

Encourager of Life Ministries

544 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Children's Tree House Learning Center

903 Mountain Lion Circle

Southern Grace Salon Boutique

302 Millers Crossing

The Bar on Veterans

524 E. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Foot Spa

300 W. CTE

Vitology Skincare

300 FM 2410

Faith Christian School

546 E. FM 2410

Frost Driving School

2330 Verna Lee Blvd.

Vanessa Grymes Microblading

600 Indian Trail

Ace Dental

300 E. CTE

Best Western

511 Pan American Drive

Wholesale Bargains

105 Cox Drive



DAVE MILLER | HERALD

This Mediterranean-style office building at 326 Morgan St. has seen several business tenants come on board in the past 12 months.

J Stylez Salon Suites

600 Indian Trail

Express ER

980 Knights Way

Twisted Oak Grill

225 Cox Drive

Stillhouse Flats

2926 Cedar Knob Road

Silverblatt Law Office

120 W. CTE

Will Properties, Inc.

704-C Edwards Drive

Torres Vista Real-Estate

220 Commercial Drive

Universal Cleaning Solutions Services

3396 Vineyard

Anytime Fitness Harker Heights

506 E. CTE #105

Berry's Counseling Services

100 W. CTE, Suite 208

Iglesia Cristiana el Encuentro

544 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Kashif M. Haider, LPC

100 W. CTE

Shari L. Hogue, Ph.D

100 W. CTE

Wellstone Health Partners

800 W. CTE

McDonald's restaurant

920 E. Knights Way

Movies and More Galore

2502 Jackson Drive

The Recycle Wagon

611 Red Cloud Drive

Popcorn Utopia

302 Millers Crossing

**OTHER BUSINESSES
HOME-BASED OR ONLINE ONLY**

• Ladybug & Sugarp-lumb's

• Oh My Brigadeiros

• VT Services

• Noble Northwest

• Elohim Florist

• Rick Smith Construction

• Phillips Girls Bakery and More

• Gigi's Parties and Events

• Stugdio Juklwa

• Circletown Marketing

• Sweet Heart Bears

• Pretti With Beads

• The Simplified Home, LLC

• Slice of Heaven Farms

• Robisons Ventures, LLC

• Millers Rentals, LLC

• The Green Plant

• Enlighten Eyes

• Johna Bounce and Play

• Bliss Treats

• Glam & Pop Events by Kim

• Little Sunshine Academy

• Y&Y's Creation

• Barretomart

• Cooper's Classic Crafts

• Chiquita's Fashion

• Uncle Ron's Beef Jerky

Public library growing by leaps and bounds

BY STEPHANIE RATTS GRISSOM
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Professor and author R. David Lankes once said, “Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.”

The Stewart C. Meyer Harker Heights Public Library, located at 400 Indian Trail, is one such library that has built its community, and, with library director Lisa Youngblood at the helm, continues to do so all the time.

The library has something for everyone, young and old. There are over 52,000 in-house materials alone, such as books, audio books, magazines, and DVDs.

If one counts the electronic content the library has available, such as e-books and e-audio books, the number jumps to over another 23,000 materials. In all, that is over 75,000 total materials available to library patrons within the city of Harker Heights and beyond.

The electronic content is made available to library patrons through the Texas Book Festival Grant. The monies received from this grant have been used specifically for technology, to include the e-content which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to any library patron.

“Our patrons lead varied, dynamic lives, so we’re always looking for more diverse online services,” Youngblood said.

“We are very fortunate that our community is looking at education holistically — it’s



HERALD | FILE

Magician Kent Cummins performs a magic trick for children at the Harker Heights Public Library's Magical Mayhem event, part of the library's summer reading program. A special event is offered each Wednesday during the summer.

in everything we do. Education [can be] through recreation — it's for all ages and different learning styles.”

Even adults are learning when visiting the library, especially when taking advantage of the library's online services. Then there is the book club, where people are learning when having discussions about the book of the month, or even discussing differing viewpoints — it's all learning, while still having fun.

This is one of the many things that has Youngblood so excited about the new programs the library puts together for the community.

Tech Tuesdays is one of those; it began this summer, and took children ages five through 12 on an exploration of different technologies ranging from the simple to the complex.

While Tech Tuesdays will be too difficult to maintain during the school year due to scheduling, Youngblood said

instead it will be replaced with a science club, which

will be held once per week after school hours and which will focus on chemistry and physics, but with more technology being added. The science club will be continuous throughout the school year, and will be tailored for children ages 6 and up.

Youngblood said that, “We are always looking to change our programming to keep things fresh,” and with that in mind, she said just a couple of things people can look forward to will be a superhero day sometime in September and an early literacy fair in November. She also said she and her staff are always looking for new ideas.



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ASYMCA still growing in third year

BY LISA DAVIDSON
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

The Armed Services YMCA Wellness Center is in its third year of operation and continuous to grow. The center focusses on providing a vast variety of programs for members of all ages.

"We want to ensure that our membership brings full value to the families," said Killeen Armed Services YMCA executive-director Sheri Yerrington.

The ASYMCA, located next to Purser Family Park at 110 Mountain Lion Road, currently reports 4,628 membership units, which equals over 16,000 individuals.

According to Yerrington, the biggest growth is visible in family memberships. The non-profit organization constantly adds new features to its selection of activities.

The past year, the ASYMCA Wellness Center especially focused on adding programs for children between six months old to teenage years. Yerrington assured that families can pick an activity for all ages and interests.

"That includes a variety of programs like youth sports, fitness programs, cooking classes, dance classes, martial arts classes, summer camps with focus on specialty camps as well as before and after school care," she said.

Many of the offered programs are also available for non-members.



HERALD | FILE

Dr. Erik Lovria of Seton Medical Center talks about health issues during a Lunch and Learn program at the Armed Services YMCA test kitchen in Harker Heights. Seton partners with the ASYMCA to offer the monthly program.

"It's just a difference between paying a member's price versus a non-members price," Yerrington said.

The Wellness Center also tried to strengthen the bond between children and parents.

"We are offering some fitness classes for ... tweens, from nine years old to 13 years of age, that allows them ... to work out with their parents in the building. If they don't take the class however, they would not have access until age 14."

Children from age 6 months and up can use the child watch area.

The lower level of the Wellness Center also offers its members Olympic-size pool and therapy pool with a chair lift. Men's, women's and family locker-rooms as well as three family changing rooms with showers are connected to the pool area. The member's café offers drinks and snacks. Sports like

basketball, volleyball and pickleball can be played in the main gym. The YMCA also moved its spinning studio to the lower floor.

The second floor features an indoor walking track as well as weight, exercise and cardio equipment. Group classes like pilates, TRX suspension training and total body bootcamp are held at additional exercise studios.

Non-profits like the ASYMCA are continually fundraising to ensure program support and success.

"We just finished our annual campaign which raises dollars for those who do not have the ability to pay the full amount," Yerrington said. "We can truly say that we never turn anybody away for programs or services due to their inability to pay for YMCA services."

The ASYMCA also continues its support for military members and

PLEASE SEE **ASYMCA, 21**

FROM PAGE 20

families with projects like Operation Kid Comfort, creating custom-made photo transfer quilts and pillows to help with the separation of deployment.

"Right now, they are celebrating their 9th year here and have made 2,045 quilts so far," said John Marshall, director of marketing for the ASYMCA Killeen.

Marshall said the volunteers were working hard to support the children of deployed soldiers to give them comfort while their parent is away.

Members can look forward to new programs which will be launched in the near future.

Vision XXI project moves forward

BY BOB MASSEY

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Two phases of the Anderson Arbors project, begun by the Vision XXI Class of 2017 has been completed.

As of June, 2018, 58 crepe myrtle trees have been planted in addition to the laying of memorial bricks at the foot of each tree along FM 2410.

Vision XXI Class-2017 with the help of 75 volunteers from around the area manned shovels, pickaxes and other tools strong enough to break rocky soil, met in April to begin the planting of red crepe myrtle trees for Anderson Arbors.

"The class raised \$15,000 to fund the purchase of the trees

and inscribed bricks, which is the most money collected for a project in the history of Vision XXI," according to Mary Shabunia, vice president of business development and the coordinator of Vision XXI.

The project was named Anderson Arbors, in honor of Dr. Jim Anderson, the creator of Vision XXI and retired chancellor of Central Texas College.

The Vision XXI Class-2018 continues its monthly field trips that have led them to Fort Hood, along with several medical and education facilities and others.

As an example, Quality of Life Day includes tours of the Harker Heights Fire and Police departments, a stop at the

Boulders Climbing Center, plus informational talks by representatives of Parks and Recreation, HHPD juvenile probation plus a tree planting in honor of the 2017 Vision XXI Rising Star.

Every trip agenda includes discussion about the class project, which in 2018 is Smart Mart.

The Smart Project is designed to involve students and parents in volunteering, acts of kindness and academics by rewarding positive behaviors by earning Star Bucks. Parents and students can redeem them at the Smart Mart for items of their choice. Businesses can make a one-time donation to become a Smart Mart Partner.

Mobility 2030 regional plan moves forward

BY BOB MASSEY

HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Mobility 2030 is an offshoot of The Killeen/Temple Metropolitan Planning Organization (KTMPPO). In fact, they call theirs 2040.

A regional plan, Mobility 2030 was developed to figure out how Harker Heights could best merge with KTMPPO and maintain connectivity with their broader objectives.

Joseph Molis, director of planning of development, said, "We mirrored that format at our level for ease of translation from one system to another."

Mobility 2030 has addressed pedestrian walkers but what needs consideration is cyclists

and mass transit to be aligned with the KTMPPO plan. Their plan has broad strokes as to what the county priority will become.

"We're filling in the details for our specific region," Molis said.

The thoroughfare plan has identified key arterial roads to the city and others that are needed to better address access issues especially along Fuller Lane.

"What we see is some kind of connector between Fuller Lane and the Evergreen subdivision or Fuller Lane and Comanche Gap Road. We have a conceptual map of that plan but Warrior's Path has moved to the top of the list," Molis said.

Molis said it's no surprise that Harker Heights is now fast tracking Warrior's Path and following the lead of the Killeen Independent School District, which has fast-tracked the construction of a middle school to the year 2020.

"It's unfortunate that Killeen ISD fast-tracked their school faster than we can build the road," Molis said. "The school will be in before we can begin to widen this two-lane road that has no shoulders. The rush on the school is due to residential growth in that part of the city."

City officials have also identified Chaparral Road as another key need and the straightening of the hard "S"

curve. City staff is considering the future of that road now and how to determine the best solution.

"The school district has been good partners in including us in meetings about the new middle school, Chaparral Road and the plans to build a new elementary school in Nolanville opposite the middle school on Warrior's Path," Molis said.

Out of Mobility 2030 has come a sidewalk network. The city had no sidewalk requirements in residential developments until 2014.

There is now an ordinance requiring sidewalks in all new developments. The network is there. It's now a matter of priorities.



PHOTOS BY MIKE GIBBS | HERALD

Silhouettes of animals and paw prints adorn the remodeled Harker Heights Pet Adoption Center off Indian Trail. Renovations added 2,500 square feet and added new features including a new surgical area, a cat patio, or “Catio,” and a “Puppy Porch” dog run.

Pet adoption center renovations near completion

BY BOB MASSEY
HERALD CORRESPONDENT



People tour the renovated Pet Adoption Center on Indian Trail during the July 31 dedication ceremony.

The city’s newly renovated Pet Adoption Center on Indian Trail coming on line last month, with an open house and dedication July 31.

Alberta Barrett, finance director for the city, said the project added about 2,500 square feet of space to the existing facility.

One of the features is are special patios for cats called Catos.

These are three rooms just for cats with screened-in porch areas.

“It’s really neat because the cats can see out and behave like they’re outside,”



MIKE GIBBS | HERALD

One of the newly remodeled operating rooms is seen at the Harker Heights Pet Adoption Center.

Barrett said.

"Towers have been added so they can climb and enjoy being active and social with other felines."

Even though Barrett does not supervise the Pet Adoption Center, she became involved with the construction portion by working with the contractor and architect. She managed financial matters, on behalf of the city.

"It's a little out of my realm but it's been fun," Barrett said.

The final plans arrived in 2017, which opened up the gateway for the bidding process to begin.

For dogs, there will be a "Puppy Porch," where puppies and older dogs can run and play under a covered grassy area.

A major part of the renovation is a new surgical suite, prep room and exam room for the purpose of spaying and neutering animals.

"This will be great because we can do these procedures in-house," Barrett said. "Until now, we had to send cats and dogs to veterinarians' offices throughout the area."

The surgical area allows the Pet Adoption Center to control its own program in

reducing the cat and dog population such as in the case of feral cats and providing services for injured pets. Vaccinations also can be given at the center.

The new section of the shelter, in combination with the existing area, covers 9,000 square feet.

The dog kennels remain in place and include the area where visitors can come in and socialize with the dogs and check their personalities in a way that is up close and personal.

That same kind of space is available for cats, with a special room designated for

those who are considering the adoption process.

Barrett said, "This addition was sorely needed and due to great design work it no longer looks like a post office. The center finally has its own identity."

There is artwork of cat prints and a large cat on the Indian Trail side of the building. To the left of the south side entrance is artwork of dog prints and a large dog.

At the corner of Clore Road and Indian Trail is a new LED sign that can be used for public announcements about the center.

Seton Medical Center still going strong six years later

BY STEPHANIE RATTS GRISSOM
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Seton Medical Center, located at 850 W Central Texas Expressway, has seen a lot of growth in its now six years in Harker Heights.

When the hospital first opened its doors in June of 2012, there were 269 employees on hand to begin treating their first patients. By last year, that number had risen to 400.

Though that number itself has not changed significantly for the year 2018, hospital CEO Zach Dietze said, “You’re not going to see big changes in terms of the number of employees, in the number of physicians that we have on staff.”

Dietze continued, “We added an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgeon at the end of last year, and we also added a gastroenterologist, and those two physicians have had an incredible impact on our ability to provide care in those specialty areas ... it doesn’t sound like much, but it means a lot to us in terms of being a small community hospital.”

He went on to explain that some physicians may be



COURTESY PHOTO

Seton Medical Center-Harker Heights enters its sixth year of operation this summer. In the past year, the hospital saw about 90,000 patients and has added an ear, nose and throat surgeon and a gastroenterologist.

telemedicine physicians, such as radiologists or psychiatric consultants, who may not be physically at the hospital, but rather work off-site while still being a part of the staff, providing their services from a distance.

Then there are other employees, such as those who work part-time or who only

work weekends or nights, or even those who work only on an as-needed basis.

“We use a combination of mostly full-time staff, but also a good number of part-time and PRN (“when necessary”) staff to cover our hospital.”

In terms of patients seen per year, Dietze said that the number from last year, 90,000,

is still accurate, with about 50,000 of that number coming from emergency room visits.

“We’ve really leveled off in some of our numbers, like our emergency department, that’s still an accurate number.”

The biggest changes Seton has seen has been in their new certifications, awarded

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by the Joint Commission, a nonprofit organization which is recognized nationwide.

Dietze said, "We have advanced certifications in stroke, and hip and knee replacement, from the Joint Commission. We received both of those this year since January ... which are huge for us this year. We are the first in the area to receive the Advanced Hip and Knee Certification."

Seton also received the ACTION Registry Silver Performance Achievement Award for 2018 from the American College of Cardiology.

Seton was only one of 95 hospitals nationwide to receive the award. In addition, they again earned a Leapfrog hospital safety rating of "A" for the spring of 2018.

Seton has hired a new director of Physical Therapy



COURTESY PHOTO

Zach Dietze, right, CEO of Seton Medical Center-Harker Heights, visits with a security guard. Dietze has been at the hospital's helm since February 2017.

who now heads the outpatient physical therapy program at the Armed Services YMCA.

The hospital also continues to partner with the Greater Killeen Community Clinic

Seton also received the ACTION Registry Silver Performance Achievement Award for 2018 from the American College of Cardiology.

(formerly the Free Clinic). Seton now has clinics in Belton and Killeen, and has expanded its partnership with Freedom Urgent Care, opening a new clinic on W.S. Young Drive in Killeen.

Seton now takes Scott and White Health Plan Insurance.

As Seton Medical Center enters its seventh year, Dietze said, "We want to make sure that we're pushing ourselves to be the best that we can be."

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Harker Heights Food Center moves to new location to feed the hungry

BY LISA DAVIDSON
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Lacking food is reality for many. The Harker Heights Food Center helps those in need by providing every-day groceries.

"If you need the food pantry you will find us. If you don't use the food pantry, you probably don't even know we exist," said Elizabeth Berkhoudt, director of outreach of the HHFC.

Due to space limitations and a redirecting ministry at the First Baptist Church, the HHFC moved to the Harker Heights United Methodist Church at 208 W. Cardinal Lane in June.

"We were looking for an or-



LISA DAVIDSON | HERALD

The Rev. Jannette Miller, pastor of Harker Heights United Methodist Church, stocks the shelves of the Harker Heights Food Center with canned goods.

ganization that would accept us and include us in a ministry," Berkhoudt said. "When

we are doing more than 70 home deliveries to shut-ins, these people need companion-

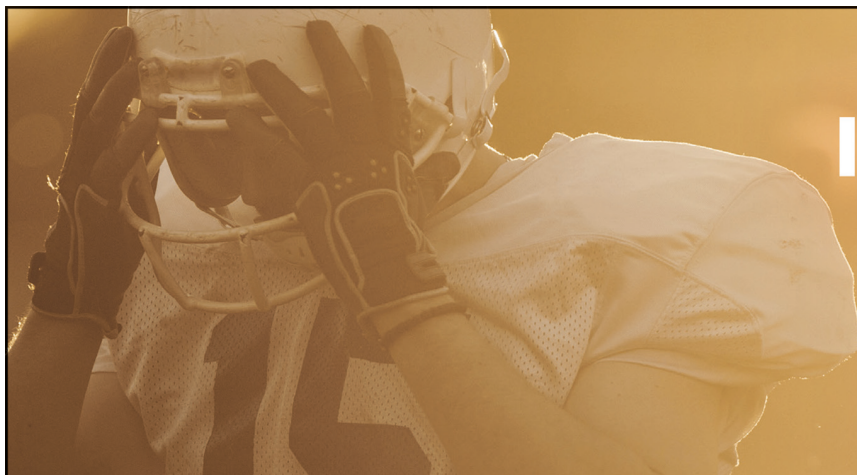
ship, they need company, they need human interaction."

The Rev. Jannette Miller, pastor of Harker Heights United Methodist, is happy to have an opportunity to help.

"We think this is what Jesus has called us to do as a church," she said. "There is very specific scripture that says feeding the hungry is a Kingdom priority as is hospitality to the stranger."

The Harker Heights United Methodist Church relocated their youth room and a Sunday class room to create the new home of the city's food bank.

"It means an opportunity to show the love of Christ to our community members and it helps us to get out of our-



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selves,” Miller said. “We have plenty of space, we could even expand a little if we need to.”

According to Berkhoudt, there are many ways to get into an unexpected food crisis.

“It could be anyone,” she said. “We have grandparents who suddenly have grandbabies coming to them, we have people who have their houses burnt down or relocated here from somewhere else and haven’t gotten a paycheck. And then we have people whose retirement stipends don’t go far enough.”

According to an estimation by the U.S. Census Data Bureau, Harker Heights has a population of over 31,000. The HHFC website states, that one out of every five locals lives below the poverty level and has difficulty meeting his

basic nutritional needs.

“If everyone ... gave a dollar a year ... to the food pantry, we could feed all the hungry families in Harker Heights for one year,” Berkhoudt said. “That’s ... a sad reality.”

People in need can register on sight. A picture ID for every person being claimed in the household as well as a utility bill or rental agreement for proof of residency in Bell County is requested. Recipients must match USDA standards for supplemental nutritious assistance.

“Based on the number of people in their family, they get so many cans of beans, so many boxes of pasta, so many cans of vegetables, so many packages of meat,” Berkhoudt said. “We let them choose what they want to feed their family.”

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