



CITY OF HEATH UPDATE

SPECIAL EVENT NOTICE

Due to concern over COVID-19
Fun & Fit In The Park, featuring the Heart of Heath 5k and
Family Fun Run has been cancelled.

APRIL

2020

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

CITY OF HEATH RESPONSE TO COVID-2019

AS OF MARCH 20, 2020

GO TO HEATHTX.COM AND THE CITY FACEBOOK PAGE FOR MOST CURRENT UPDATES.

On March 17, we took the difficult and sobering measure of joining community leaders throughout the United States in taking a proactive response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) by declaring a local state of emergency disaster in Heath.

The action followed the declaration of a national state of emergency by President Trump and a state of disaster for Texas by Governor Abbott and allowed our City to take measures that help limit opportunities for the virus to spread. These measures were later enforced in all Texas cities by the Public Health Disaster declaration issued by Governor Abbott on March 19 as cases of COVID-19 increased.

We are spending an extensive amount of time in communication with local, county and state officials. This includes a daily conference call with Rockwall County Judge David Sweet, State Representative Justin Holland, every mayor and city manager in the county, RISD and Royce City ISD officials, public health officials, and the Rockwall County Office of Emergency Management.

Heath and Rockwall County citizens can take confidence in this strong alliance where we are sharing information, ideas, resources and support on a situation that has literally been changing by the hour. Actions taken countywide such as declaring a local emergency have not been taken lightly and we realize the severe impact they bring to our citizens and businesses. But, we are all committed to doing our part to keep people healthy and flatten the curve of the COVID-19 virus.

As health experts are saying, "if we feel we are moving too quickly to get ahead of the spread of the virus, then we are moving too slowly."

At this time, City offices are closed to the public except by appointment until further notice. Staff continue to work and remain available by phone and email during the normal business hours of 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. to meet the needs of our residents and businesses. This includes the mission critical functions of Heath DPS, Public Works and code enforcement. Trash and recycling collection remains on schedule, and citizens can be

confident in the safety of our water supply. (See facts from the North Texas Water Municipal District in sidebar on page 2.)

As much as possible, City staff is working with vendors and customers through online means such as phone meetings and conference calls, online payment options, and other online services. The 3% credit card fee on utility bills has been waived temporarily to promote phone and web payments.

"If you are sick, stay home. Testing is far less important at this point than isolating yourself or family member from the general population unless there is respiratory distress."

**Dr. Gary A. Bonaquisti,
Rockwall County Physician**

MAYOR'S MESSAGE...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We thank our citizens and businesses for their cooperation and understanding. Our local businesses are already feeling the brunt of efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus, and we are very concerned about their well being. Our Health Economic Development Corporation is working on an assistance program to help our valued businesses make it to the other side of this crisis. Especially our restaurants that have been required to halt dine-in services. They can still serve you via delivery or curbside/to go. Please take advantage of this way to make your life a little easier, and support them in a big way.

This is a challenging time with a significant impact on your life. Please know that our City will continue to work hard on your behalf to not only mitigate the spread of the virus, but do anything in our power to ease the pain. Please follow the latest updates on the City website, Facebook page and Twitter. And, please stay safe by following CDC recommendations.

We will make it through this, together.
May God Bless you and yours.
Mayor Kelson Elam

HOW COVID-19 AFFECTS THE CITY OF HEATH

Measures identified in the Texas and City of Heath emergency declaration are designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As a result, the City has taken these actions:

- Limiting public gatherings to no more than 10 attendees in accordance with the new federal guidelines...
- Sit-down service in restaurants is prohibited. Delivery and curbside/to go service continues.
- The Annual Heart of Heath 5K/1-Mile Family Fun Run on April 11 was cancelled. Anyone who has already registered for the 5k or Family Fun Run will receive a refund.
- The March 24 City Council meeting was cancelled; the April 14 meeting is tentative
- Municipal Court on April 13 was cancelled.
- Sports games and practices on Towne Center Park fields are cancelled until April 3, at which time the situation will be evaluated with the J.E.R. Chilton YMCA to determine if play may resume or the cancellation period should be extended. No new field reservations will be taken until further notice. Refunds on any deposits or fees paid can be obtained by contacting the YMCA at minkous@ymcadallas.org.
- Use of the City of Heath Community Room is cancelled until April 30. May reservations will be evaluated at a later date. Refunds on any deposits or fees paid can be obtained by calling customer service at 972-771-6228.
- Current reservations for the pavilions at Towne Center Park or Terry Park are cancelled through April 30. No new reservations are being taken at this time.
- Gyms are closed statewide, including Anytime Fitness in Heath.
- The City has encouraged businesses to also limit public gatherings to no more than 10 attendees in accordance with federal guidelines. This includes staggering medical and dental patients, staggering salon customers and limiting attendance at meetings. Spacing of employees is encouraged to achieve mission critical business functions.

CITY CREATES DRAINAGE REPAIR PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The City of Heath has created a Drainage Repair Participation Program to assist in the cost of drainage repairs on privately-owned residential properties that meet the program's criteria for assistance. The standard maximum financial participation by the city is \$15,000 or 50% of the project, whichever is less. Funds are limited and subject to availability in the current approved City budget.

Repair projects must comply with current city policies for drainage repairs on private property. You can find more information including the participation criteria, process and an application at www.heathtx.com/drainage-repair-program.

FACTS PROVIDED BY CITY'S WATER SUPPLIER, NORTH TEXAS WATER MUNICIPAL DISTRICT (NTWMD):

- Based on current evidence, the risk to water supplies is low.
- Coronaviruses (and other viruses) do not persist in chlorinated/ chloraminated waters, such as those used in the water treatment process and the transmission of drinking water.
- Standard municipal wastewater system disinfection practices, including ultraviolet irradiation and/or chlorination, are effective in controlling the virus provided utilities monitor and maintain required disinfection levels during treatment.
- The NTWMD is working on plans to ensure continuity of operations if the virus should begin to effect essential personnel or their families.

CITY OF HEATH MAY 2 GENERAL ELECTION CANCELED; INCUMBENTS RE-ELECTED

The City of Heath recently called an election to be held on May 2 to elect three City Councilmembers for Mayor, Place 3 and Place 5. All three incumbents, including Mayor Kelson Elam, Donna Rolater (Place 3) John Beaman (Place 5), were unopposed. As a result, the Heath City Council cancelled the election in accordance with Section 2.053(a) of the Texas Election Code and approved a Resolution declaring that incumbent candidates have been certified as unopposed and elected to office.

Mayor Elam, Councilmember Donna Rolater and Councilmember John Beaman are scheduled to take the Oath of Office at the regular City Council meeting Tuesday, May 12.



Photo above: Members of the 3rd Class of the DPS Citizens Academy pictured with DPS personnel are top row from left: Chief Terry Garrett, James M. Bryant, Tony Rolater, Carl Whitbeck and Officer Michael Morgan. Bottom row from left: John McNally, John Arvin, Marco Longoria, Sherry Gillespie, Jaclyn England, E. Eugene Burkett and Captain Brandon Seery. Not pictured: City of Heath Councilmember Donna Rolater, Michael Zilinskas and Anyiesa Johnson.

3RD CLASS OF THE HEATH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY CITIZENS ACADEMY GRADUATES

The City of Heath congratulates the 3rd Class of the Heath Department of Public Safety Citizens Academy, which graduated on March 5 following completion of a 12-week program that provides an “inside” view of how the department operates as well as hands-on training in life-saving skills such as CPR. These citizens are now eligible to participate in further training to become members of the volunteer Citizens on Patrol (C.O.P.) program. For information about the next DPS Citizens Academy, contact Officer Michael Morgan at mmorgan@heathtx.com or call 972-961-4900.

CITY-WIDE RESIDENTIAL WATER USE

The City Council received a staff presentation on city-wide residential water use at its February 25 meeting. You can listen to the audio and download the accompanying presentation at heathtx.com/government/city-council-meeting-audio.

FOLLOWING ARE KEY POINTS AND USAGE TIPS INCLUDED:

- The City of Heath gets water from the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) through the City of Rockwall
- NTMWD is responsible for setting the rates charged to customers. Rates are calculated annually and based on the projected cost of providing the service. Water rates are set per 1,000 gallons. As our provider, the City of Rockwall charges Heath an administrative fee of 10 cents per 1,000 gallons in addition to the NTMWD’s rate. Along with the cost of water, the rates include the cost for maintenance and improvements to the water system.
- The City’s fee schedule is adopted annually and can be found at heathtx.com. Each customer’s bill is based on actual consumption.
- Water usage trends are at their peak between May and September as people irrigate landscaping and fill pools more often. This often pushes customers over the base rate of 2,000 gallons per month. Water consumption above 2,000 gallons is billed at a higher rate to promote water conservation.
- The City has conducted a Meter Verification Testing program of reading water meters both manually and electronically, and no differences or errors have been found.
- Customers are encouraged to monitor their own water meters and usage trends. An instructional graphic is included in the presentation on page 23.
- Water service is not a profit center for the City. In fact, the City invests approximately \$320,000 more in expenses each year than the revenue received to deliver this vital service.

U.S. CENSUS 2020: BE SURE YOU REPRESENT HEATH!

The 2020 Census is more than a population count. It’s an opportunity to shape the future of our community. The results of this once-a-decade count determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. The data is also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts; determine where communities need new schools and new roads; and guide how billions of dollars in federal funding are allocated to more than 100 programs including Medicaid. Every home in Heath should receive an invitation to participate by April 1. You can respond online, by phone or by mail, so be sure to take time for this important civic duty.



HEATH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

SERGEANTS BRANDON SEERY AND JEVIN WOMACK PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN

Pictured Above: Department of Public Safety Sergeants Brandon Seery (right) and Jevin Womack.

Department of Public Safety Sergeants Brandon Seery and Jevin Womack were promoted March 5 to captain to serve as second-in-command to the chief overseeing a department of 23 officers who are triple certified as fire fighters, police officers and EMTs.

“Captain Seery and Captain Womack each have an exemplary record of service, and we are thrilled to have two professionals of this caliber take on greater responsibilities within the department and in our community,” said City Manager Aretha Adams. “I am confident that they will continue to be strong leaders who possess proven expertise, exceptional communication skills and a genuine commitment to the welfare and safety of our citizens, businesses and visitors.”

ABOUT YOUR DPS CAPTAINS

Captain Seery and Captain Womack have supervised police and fire operations for their shifts, which includes incident command. Both captains hold certifications in multiple public safety disciplines and have been named Officer of the Year by the City of Heath.

Captain Seery has implemented numerous new programs for Heath DPS including body-worn cameras and policy, Taser training and use of force policy, and electronic ticket writing. He instructs and certifies officers on the use of force and is the fleet, equipment and in-car video and body-worn camera administrator.

Captain Seery has also served as Assistant Chief of the Union Valley Fire Department, Criminal Investigator with the Balch Springs Police Department, a Driver Operator-EMT with the Rockwall Fire Department, and a Transport Officer with the Rockwall County Sheriff’s Office. He graduated from Kilgore College with an Associate of Applied Science in Fire Protection.

“I am honored and excited to serve the citizens and staff in this new position,” said Captain Seery. “I will work diligently to make sure Heath DPS continues to provide exemplary public safety to our community.”

FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

“We could not be more pleased with the selection of these fine gentlemen to lead our Department of Public Safety into the future,” said Mayor Kelson Elam.

“They can expect the full support and confidence of our City Council as each invests not only his time and expertise in this role, but puts his own personal safety on the line every day to protect our citizens.”

Captain Womack began his service to the Heath community in 1996 as a volunteer fire fighter. He became a reserve police officer in 2000, and later became a triple certified officer in 2001 as the Department of Public Safety was formally established by the City of Heath with officers who were certified as fire fighters, police officers and EMTs.

Captain Womack taught the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education program) in the local schools for many years and was the School Resource Officer at Cain Middle School from 2014-2016 before his promotion to sergeant.

Captain Womack has also served as a part time Driver-Firefighter-EMT for the City of Fate, and he is a Rockwall High School graduate.

“I am grateful for this incredible opportunity to lead some of the absolute best officers in public safety and to serve the citizens of an extraordinary community in a more challenging capacity,” said Captain Womack. “I thank those who have selected me for this position as well as the people who have taught and mentored me along the way. Their confidence means the world to me.”

Both Captain Seery and Captain Womack credit devoted wives for their support and sacrifice throughout their careers, and both captains are the proud fathers of daughters.

PATH MEMBERSHIP

Learn how to become a charter member of PATH and see the latest list of charter donors at heathtx.com/PATH