



CITY OF GATESVILLE, TEXAS

Bradford Hunt
City Manager

Recognition of Meritorious Service
March 24, 2026

Dear Mayor, Council, and Citizens of Gatesville,

It is my pleasure to recognize the below-listed members of your Gatesville Fire Department and city government for their outstanding and meritorious service to the citizens of Gatesville.

At 6:50 pm on March 16, 2026, police and fire personnel responded to a report of smoke coming from the southwest corner of the Coryell County Courthouse square. Crews arrived and called for additional assistance due to a fire that was quickly spreading. From that time and throughout the next 28 hours, Gatesville Fire Department personnel, along with dozens of other fire departments, law enforcement agencies, City Public Works crews, and others, acted with utmost courage in an impossible situation. The buildings on the west side of the courthouse square were each 80 to 100 years old, and contained an actualized nightmare's worth of fuel for the fire. Old newspapers, old building materials, and a large amount of furniture combined to make for intense heat; meanwhile, the threat of collapsing walls and roofs, along with active gas lines, attributed to the extremely hazardous conditions.

The Gatesville Fire Department is 100% comprised of volunteers. Most of these men and women had worked all day and none of them hesitated to dedicate the next 24+ hours to making all possible efforts to contain the massive fire. Without their efforts, this historic fire could have turned much larger portions of downtown Gatesville to ash.

Beyond the fire department's intense and courageous efforts, City of Gatesville staff members worked through the night to support them, including:

- Public Works crews provided scene support, and even dug up active gas lines a few blocks away so that Atmos Gas could shut them off.
- Police Department personnel worked through power outages to ensure dispatch services were only temporarily disrupted, worked through the night after being called out to assist with scene security, and developed massive traffic detours on short notice.

For these reasons and many others, I wish to recognize the following Gatesville heroes for their Meritorious Service, well above and beyond the call of duty:

- The entire Gatesville Volunteer Fire Department, including Chief Robert Featherston and Assistant Chief Bobby Buster
- The Gatesville Public Works Department, including Director Chad Newman
- The entire Gatesville Police Department, including Chief Jeffrey Clark and Captain Keith Mueller

Thank you,



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