



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Celebration of Selfless Service: The McAllen Fire Department Annual Awards Ceremony

Firefighters, staff and retirees recognized for their unwavering commitment to protecting the community

To celebrate the dedication that keeps our community safe, the McAllen Fire Department recently honored its firefighters, civilian staff, and retirees at its annual awards ceremony. This recognition highlights a significant year in 2025 for the department, during which more than 7,000 emergency calls for service were successfully managed. Supported by a dedicated team of 182 firefighters and 25 civilian personnel working in constant coordination around the clock, the department continues to fulfill its mission of protecting lives, safeguarding property, and delivering critical emergency assistance when it is needed most.

“This evening is about honoring the men and women who answer the call without hesitation,” said City Manager Isaac J. Tawil. “From emergencies here in McAllen to disasters across Texas, our firefighters and staff show up with courage, professionalism, and a deep sense of duty. Their work protects lives, brings comfort in crisis, and reflects the best of public service. We are truly grateful for all they do.”

One of the evening’s most profound honors was the Distinguished Service Award given to firefighters who rushed to Kerrville after the catastrophic July 4, 2025 floods. Joining statewide rescue and recovery teams without a second thought, these brave individuals demonstrated the ultimate ideal of their profession: that the duty to protect and save lives extends far beyond our own community lines.

Distinguished Service Award – State Response to Kerrville

AEMC M. Guerra, AFC Luna, Capt. J. Carlson, Lt. B. Carlson, Lt. R. Delgado, Lt. D. Spencer, Lt. E. Alaniz, Dr. A. Magana, Capt. L. Dahlberg, Capt. F. Hernandez, Lt. C. Myles, and FF A. Tanamachi.

2025 Of the Year Award Recipients

Employee of the Year – Ismael Pacheco

Telecommunicator of the Year – Oscar Alvarado

Firefighter of the Year – Rebekah Garcia

Driver of the Year – Joey Bourbois

Officer of the Year – Lieutenant Leo Mendoza

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Perfect Attendance Recognition

Civil Service

Brad Carlson, Ismael Villareal, Felipe Hernandez, Sam Cavazos, and John Partida.

Non-Civil Service

April De Leon

Master Certification Recipients

John Adams, Jacob Alvarado, Patrick Battaglia, Rogelio Cadenas, Ernesto Chavez, Mario Chavez, Ricardo Cuellar, Ramon Guajardo, Rolando Morales, Jerome Salinas, Venancio Valenzuela, and Michael Vela.

Retirees

- March 2, 2025 – Dr. Jose Valenzuela
- March 16, 2025 – FF. Gerardo Gomez
- June 30, 2025 – FF. Roberto Rojas
- February 2, 2026 – Dr. Edward Calahan
- February 3, 2026 – Dr. E. Espinoza

20-Year Service Awards

Robert Rojas, Ventura Garza, Erik Cantu, Jose Chavero, Robert Vargas, Venancio Valenzuela, Rey Ortiz, and Arturo Hernandez.

Special recognition was given to crews whose service reflects both swift action in moments of urgency and a lasting commitment to community safety. Quick and professional response to a bee attack incident, and the other the L.A.F.S./CRR Program, educating students while instilling lifelong lessons in fire safety, prevention, and emergency preparedness.

Engine 5 Bee Attack Response

A/Lt. V. Papakostas, A/Dr. S. Cavazos, and FF. Victor Trevino.

L.A.F.S./CRR Program

Lt. E. Alaniz, Lt. L. Mendoza, Dr. R. Ruiz, Dr. J. Perez, Dr. V. Rios, and FF S. Garza.

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About the City of McAllen

Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Known as the “City of Palms,” McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. McAllen city leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement. For more information, visit www.mcallen.net and follow us on social media @cityofmcallen