

IT'S GOOD TO REFLECT

The end of the year is a time to celebrate our accomplishments, learn from our challenges, and prepare for the opportunities ahead in 2026. As your Mayor, I've also taken a moment to reflect on what we've achieved. Looking back on 2025 allows us to appreciate how far we've come and to look forward with fresh perspective and renewed purpose.

We want to take a moment to remember members of our community who are no longer with us. With heartfelt condolences, we honor the Mexico Beach citizens who passed in 2025.

Guy Cunningham

October 26, 2025
Age: 94

Helen Falconer

March 2, 2025
Age 86

Jackie Pollock

October 11, 2025
Age 83

“Tennessee” Chuck McKibbon

Date: 2025
Age: 88

Justin Bellesbach

August 19, 2025
50

Elsie Middleton

July 21, 2025
Age: 97

William “Bill” Jenkins

June 4, 2025
Age: 82

Laura Anderson

November 30, 2025
Age: 66

When someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a Treasure.

Until we meet again!

2025 Achievements

In 2025, we are proud to highlight the significant progress achieved across our city's administration to include:

- Having our city administrator and finance director in place has provided continued strong leadership and stability over this last year
- Successfully completed all outstanding audits
- Delivered the 2024 audit to the state on time, meeting all statutory requirements
- A highly productive budget season that reduced the millage rate by 0.5%
- 2025 TRIM process completed without issues
- Introduced and successfully passed a new five-year Capital Improvement Plan
- The city successfully passed a JLAC audit, affirming its commitment to transparency and accountability
- Continuing to enhance our website with a project list and weekly administrator newsletter to improve communications to keep residents informed.
- Successfully annexed Farmdale, which will bring increased ad valorem taxes and impact fees revenues to support our city's growth.

As we strengthen our city's infrastructure, services, and overall quality of life, we have accomplished the following:

- Installed a new kayak launch to promote water recreation and encourage residents to enjoy our beautiful waterways
- Completing a comprehensive stormwater management analysis to help mitigate flooding and keep our community safe
- Dune and beach restoration in cooperation with the Bay County CDC
- Continuing to install new water meters city-wide to decrease staff wage expenses and improve our services
- Implemented a new software system at the fire department to increase efficiency and enhance our emergency response capabilities
- Completed the canal beautification project, which added over 320 new plants and enhanced our city's natural beauty
- Transformed Under the Palms Park with a complete makeover, including new restroom facilities, a new picnic pavilion, trees, shelled parking lot and a recoated walking track providing more recreation space for our residents
- Installed new flag poles at Parker Park, Under the Palms Park and Sunset Park to reflect our city's patriotism and community spirit
- Updates to Parker Park include a new restroom facility, shelled parking lot, fencing, and construction of a new state-of-the-art amphitheater
- Successfully deployed floating docks on the city canal for both the Fire Department jet ski and the Sherriff Department boat which has cut response times in half and improved life safety for residents and visitors alike
- Worked with MBARA to successfully deploy 44 new artificial reefs for fishing and diving enthusiasts.
- Paving Hatley Drive, Kim Cove, Bailey Lane and road cuts throughout the city to improve driver and pedestrian safety
- Completing over 50 storm water projects and cleaning most storm water ditches to minimize the effects of major rain events
- Developed and implementing a major rain event plan to guide our staff and ensure a swift response to emergencies
- Deep cleaning the MX1 sewage lift station to extend its life and maintain our city's infrastructure
- Mobi-Mats were installed at Canal Parkway beach entrance to provide easier access for those needing assistance
- All city owned parking lots enhanced with crushed shells recovered from the beach renourishment project.

The City's continued commitment to enhance our infrastructure and amenities that were approved in 2025 and have completion or start dates in 2026 include:

- The Al Cathey Municipal Pier
- The Mexico Beach Jetties at Canal Parkway
- Boat Ramp Expansion
- 15th Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Parker Park Amphitheater
- Canal Parkway Cul-de-Sac

- ADA Dune Walkovers
- Nanook and 14th Street Lift Station Rehabilitation
- Lift Station 9, 11, and 13 Bypass Pump Installation
- 4th Street Stormwater Improvements
- Water Tank Aeration System
- Continued collaboration with FEMA to establish Police, Fire, and Civic Center facilities

Our Fire Department has also seen significant improvements, including:

- Added a new firefighter, Derek Bergthold to A shift bringing our team up to three personnel per shift and enabling us to man our new ladder truck, which was made possible by a \$500,000 state appropriations grant
- Promoting Firefighter Brian Hunt to Engineer, with a third promotion scheduled for January 2026
- Applied for two Volunteer Fire Assistance grants to upgrade our PPE for wildland firefighting for new members and for new equipment to help with the possibility of electric car fires. We received both grants with zero cost to the City of Mexico Beach.
- Thanks to the help of the Panama City Beach Fire Department, we have been able to have two of our newer members put through a Florida state certification which enables the ladder truck to respond to all fire related calls.
- Replaced aging side by side with a new 6-seater unit for beach patrol and beach side rescue calls in early 2025. This is a vital piece of equipment for anything on the beach, giving us access to places no other apparatus can go.
- Receiving a grant for thermal imaging equipment, providing our firefighters with personal handheld devices to enhance life safety for both our responders and the public.
- The Fire Department ran the 14th Annual Gollywhopper fishing tournament in 2025 with 100 entries. The largest number since the tournament began. Funds were raised to help educate, train and buy equipment for the department members.

Events in 2026 will continue through the efforts of The City of Mexico Beach, Community Development Council, Special Events Committee and MBARA. These events help build a sense of community for our residents and visitors throughout the year. These include:

- Easter Egg-stravaganza
 - Mutt Strut
 - Turkey Trot
 - Gumbo Fest
 - Tree Lighting
 - Golf Cart Parade
 - BCSO Movie Night
 - Present giveaway by Fire Department on Christmas Day
 - 4th of July Fireworks
 - Mexico Beach Fire and Rescue Golly Whopper Classic
 - MBARA King Fish Tournament
 - Captain's Party
 - Music in the Park
 - Farmer's Market in Parker Park every other Saturday
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We're proud of what we've accomplished in 2025, and we're committed to continuing our efforts to make Mexico Beach an even better place to live and visit in 2026.

I give thanks to our citizens for the support you provide as we continue to move our city forward. I am grateful for the many ways Mexico Beach has grown and been recognized for its quality of life. We are truly fortunate to live in such a remarkable city, with wonderful amenities like our three recreational parks, the premier boat launch, and our beautiful beaches.

2026 promises to be another busy and rewarding year! Finally, I give thanks for the lessons we have all learned in 2025 and wish every citizen a prosperous and fulfilling 2026.

Here's to all that is before us in this New Year.

Mayor Wolff (Rich)