

We worried that we were in for rough days when, after becoming city manager, Rick Menchaca called one of his first staff meetings and told the department heads that if they ever went over his head to the mayor or council, on any matter, he would “chop them off at the knees.” Those words had an immediate and resounding effect throughout the ranks of the approximately 900 city employees. Those are not the words of a leader, but the words that would be expected from a “work-place bully.”

We tried to dismiss that edict as a one time mistake by a new and inexperienced city manager, and hoped that he would mature into the job. Unfortunately, just the opposite has become the reality. As time progressed we witnessed the totalitarian, bullying behavior described above, become consistently more prevalent. Some of us have witnessed City Manager Menchaca belittle the Chief of Police by talking to him like a parent scolds a small child. Quite frankly, this leadership by fear and intimidation is embarrassing, and it certainly stifles employees' desires to be innovative and progressive.

As I am sure you all know, all styles of leadership create an organizational culture that becomes the identity of the organization. Even though we have great employees that care about giving good service to the citizens of Midland, and who do some very good things, this micro-management and intimidation has resulted in the development of a sick culture. A culture that often focuses on the City Manager's character needs rather than the City's needs. Many times our culture does not reward innovation and progressiveness on the part of our employees. Even though we often talk about innovation, in reality, our current culture promotes the safety of the status quo. Though our evidence is not as strong concerning department heads and employees from city departments other than police, we certainly believe, based on what we do know, that they share in our plight.

Concerning Chief Urby's decision to retire, it is true that he is not retiring because of the recent issue involving “the video.” While it is an issue, something that our organization should be looking at, and developing policy on, Chief Urby has weathered much worse problems on a number of occasions. It is the nature of an organization of our size to have occasional problems, such as this. It is how we respond to those issues and problems that matters most. Concerning Chief Urby's decision to retire, we know the truth to be that the timing of his retirement was influenced by how City Manager Rick Menchaca chose to respond to “the video” incident. The manner in which City Manager Menchaca responded was “the straw that broke the camel's back.” Everyone has a breaking point, and we believe that after approximately 7 years of belittling, berating and bullying, this was the impetus that finally caused Chief Urby to react to a much bigger problem. We believe Chief Urby decided enough is enough, I will take no more.