

Citizen of the Year

Sponsored by Patterson Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Marshall

The citizen of the year award is given to a person who has displayed outstanding dedication and contribution to the community throughout their lifetime.

Consideration is given to community service, career achievements, professional associations and demonstration of leadership.

Tonight's nominee has exemplified an unwavering commitment to community service. A life - long resident of Harrison County, his journey of service began early, earning him the coveted Eagle Scout Award for revitalizing the playground and building new picnic tables at his local church, where he still serves today.

Our nominator writes that our recipient's "lifelong dedication to community service is both inspirational and impactful." Through his efforts, he has not only enhanced the quality of life within the community but also set a lasting example of selfless service for future generations to emulate." The "...extensive contributions and unwavering dedication to community service are a testament to his character and the positive impact our award winner has had on Harrison County."

A true servant leader, our honoree is always ready to assist others regardless of the time of day or night. He often sacrifices personal time to provide aid and assistance to those in need, rarely declining requests for help. He is a "get er done" kinda guy. A tenured volunteer firefighter of 35 years now assuming the rank of Captain, he has dedicated himself to protecting the lives and properties of those within the ESD 3 area of Harrison County.

As a Life Member of the Marshall Elks Lodge #683, he has served as local Lodge President four times and held multiple leadership roles within the Texas Elks Northeast District, including Vice President, Auditor, and Esquire. He was honored with an appointment as the Grand Lodge District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, and his peers, statewide, recognized his dedication by electing him as the Texas Elks State Association President. In this role, he traveled extensively, fervently promoting the benevolent activities performed by Elks across Texas. Today, he continues to lend his expertise and guidance as the Grand Lodge Area Special Representative, providing direction to leaders of lodges throughout the Northeast District.

His commitment to community betterment extends to his active involvement with the Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce, where he has served as President of both the Ambassadors and as the Chairperson of the Chamber Board. Also a member of the Waskom Chamber of Commerce, our recipient remains an avid supporter and promoter of events throughout Harrison County.

Our honoree is a lifetime member of the Chili Appreciation Society International, Chapter President of the Two Lakes Delta Waterfowl Chapter, and Vice-Chairman for the East Texas Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited where he enjoys lifetime membership. His passion for supporting youth is particularly notable, as he actively participates in the Waskom FFA Booster Club, Farm City Week and 4-H, all fostering the development and success of young individuals in the community. Our honoree has long supported the Texas Elks Children's Services Summer Camp and Special Grant Program, advocating strongly for these initiatives that support children with developmental and physical disabilities.

Together with his wife Renea and their 3 children and 4 grand-girls, he demonstrates *through his actions* the importance of volunteering and giving back to others and the community.

Some personalities are bigger than life. Some folks live up to that description in both stature AND by definition. Fondly referred to by most everyone as *Big John*, please welcome to the stage tonight's **Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year, sponsored by Patterson Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Marshall, Judge John Oswalt.**