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Increased personal efforts to prevent DWIs and underage drinking in Old Town Burleson snagged two officers the Burleson Police Department's Most Outstanding Community Policing Award. Officer Jonathan Gomez and Officer Mark Pate were honored at the department's annual banquet.

According to the nomination, the officers "noticed several issues with the influx of establishments that serve alcohol in Old Town. Both officers took extra steps and contacted the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) for assistance in educating the staff at these establishments."

Gomez said he worked hard, along with his fellow officers on the midnight shift, to make a difference.

"I hope that our efforts have prevented possible alcohol-related injuries and deaths," Gomez said. "If we prevented even one alcohol-related death from occurring, due to our actions, I call that a success."

Pate, 35, calls Stephenville his hometown. He was hired by the Burleson Police Department in June 2010, but it wasn't his first law enforcement job. He worked for the Joshua Police Department for five-and-a-half years and worked three years as a special crimes detective.

"As a detective with Joshua I worked with Burleson on a regular basis," Pate said. "I enjoyed working with them so much that I decided to apply."

Pate is certified as an advanced peace officer, field training officer, intermediate accident investigator, intoxilyzer operator, mental health officer, and in interview and interrogation techniques. He is on the department's crash investigation team. Pate is married and the father of an 11-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl.

Gomez, 28, was hired by Burleson July 19, 2010, but he was no rookie either. The officer worked as a jailer and deputy sheriff for the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office (2005-2008), and an officer for the Godley Police Department (2008-2010). He chose Burleson in 2010 because "I always thought it would be a great place to call home. It was close to the Metroplex so there would always be

something to do, but it's small enough to still have that hometown feel. The Burleson Police Department has always been held to a higher standard and that was something I wanted to be a part of."

Public safety is in his blood. Gomez' father is the assistant director of public works and fire marshal for the City of Hamilton, Texas. He is also an emergency medical technician (EMT) for Hamilton Emergency Medical Services, the head of security for the Hamilton General Hospital emergency department and is the current deputy chief of the Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department.

"My father has been in public safety all my life," Gomez said. "He served many years as the fire chief for Hamilton. He has always been my mentor. When I was growing up I remember watching him leave the house to go to that next fire alarm. When he would leave I would wait outside, then a few minutes later I could hear the sirens on the fire trucks. I remember thinking, 'That's my Dad. He's my hero.' I watched him win awards for the things he did and that made me proud. I wanted to be just like him."

Gomez attended the University of Texas at Arlington and Tarrant County College where he studied criminal justice, forensic biology, and earned his basic EMT certification. He completed the Basic Peace Officer Academy at McLennan Community College. Gomez hopes to return to school soon to finish his degrees. He is certified as a basic peace officer, intermediate peace officer and a field training officer. Gomez is a member of the Burleson Police Department's Honor Guard and is vice president of the Burleson Police Officers Association.

The award winner's family includes his mother, who is a homemaker; one younger brother and one younger sister; his wife of five years; and a 10-year-old stepdaughter and 5-year-old daughter.