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**Top:** The new Heroes of Wylie bronze sculpture, created by Arizona artist Sid Henderson, stands at the Public Safety Building in Wylie. **Bottom:** Wylie Fire Department Capt. Matt McCormick (right) leads the color guard during ceremonies dedicating the Heroes of Wylie bronze sculpture.

Staff photos by LOUIS DELUCA/DNM

# WYLIE Honoring public servants



**Both young** and old take a look at the new Heroes of Wylie bronze sculpture, created by Arizona artist Sid Henderson, during ceremonies at the Public Safety Building in Wylie.

## City unveils statue dedicated to police officers, firefighters

By MEREDITH SHAMBURGER  
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**A** new statue in Wylie aims to honor police and firefighters for their service and sacrifice to the city.

Flanked by two engraved prayers, the bronze statue sits in front of the Public Safety Building on State Highway 78 and features a police officer and firefighter standing solemnly together.

Wylie Mayor Eric Hogue says the new Heroes of Wylie statue is a great tribute to both departments.

"A police officer and a firefighter, when they leave for work in the morning, their spouses don't know if they're going to come home or not. That's kind of a little intimidating," he said. "If we can do something to show them how much we respect them and honor them and appreciate them, I

think it's a great thing."

City officials unveiled the new sculpture during a ceremony on Sept. 11 alongside artist Sid Henderson and members of Wylie's Public Arts Advisory Board. Members of the Wylie police and fire departments stood in dress uniform as they celebrated the new statue and commemorated the anniversary of the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

The combined observance was not a coincidence, public art liaison Carole Ehrlich said.

"We wanted to do it on 9/11 because it's so significant to what [first responders] do every day," she said.

The statue stands 6 feet tall and 5 feet wide. It weighs 650 pounds. Henderson carved the sculpture in clay before a Colorado company cast it in bronze.

Henderson's work focuses on intricate details, and he said the Wylie sculpture was a great chal-

### WYLIE'S NEWEST SCULPTURE

The Heroes of Wylie statue stands 6 feet tall and 5 feet wide. It weighs 650 pounds and cost \$41,000 to make. View the statue at the Public Safety Building, 2000 N. Highway 78.

lenge.

"There were all these little subtle things which are interesting — like the rim of the firefighter [helmet] has these roses on it, and I didn't realize that firefighters had those on their helmets," he said.

Henderson lives in Tuscon, Ariz., and wasn't able to sculpt from the living models in both Wylie departments. So officials sent more than 50 photos to Henderson, with a request that the statue shouldn't look like anyone specific to the departments.

This is Henderson's second statue created with the use of photographs. He previously created a tribute to noted Texas blues singer Mance Lipscomb for the city of Navasota.

"I just had to make sure they gave me a shot of their full body and a shot of each item," Henderson said.

The statue is the city's eighth piece of art funded through the Public Arts Program, which takes 1 percent of Capital Improvement Project costs to commission art for the city. The program is also funded by events such as the Wylie Arts Festival and Bluegrass on Ballard.

Ehrlich says the Heroes of Wylie statue, costing \$41,000, was the first to be fully funded by event revenues.

For Henderson, the new statue was a chance to prove himself, especially after seeing the quality of other public art projects in the city.

"I feel very privileged and lucky to be a part of this city's sculpture collection because I feel it's very prestigious," he said.

Hogue said the new statue was "much more than I thought it would be."

"Over 50 percent of our staff is public safety," he said. "When you look at how our crime rate has continually dropped over the last few years and the fact that our fire department, which has just for the last 25 years been a full-time department, has once again gotten their ISO-1 rating, it just shows the caliber of the amazing men and women who serve our city. It's neat to be able to have something created to honor them for the dedication."

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**Top:** Wylie Fire Department Capt. Matt McCormick stands solemnly after ringing the bell in remembrance of those who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack. **Bottom:** Musician Ray L. Baker plays the song "America" on the tenor saxophone.