

# Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

## Online Citizen Survey Results Point to Progress Being Made

The results of Phase 2 of the 2014 Yakima Citizen Survey have been compiled and, much like the results of Phase 1 of this year's survey, show progress is being made in addressing some of the priorities identified by community members in previous surveys.

Phase 1 of the survey consisted of a scientifically-valid process in which about 3000 questionnaires were mailed to randomly-selected homes in Yakima. Phase 2 allowed anyone to fill out the survey on the City's website.

The first Yakima Citizen Survey was conducted in 2012. One of the priorities identified that year was street repairs, which received a meager 11% excellent/good+ rating. Last year the street repair rating rose only slightly to 18% excellent/good+. Following the City's investment of about \$20 million to repave almost 120 lane miles of roads in the summer of 2013 and from the spring through the fall this year, the street repairs rating, not surprisingly, rose to 59% excellent/good+.



Crews from Columbia Asphalt work on a section of the nearly 120 lane miles of roads in Yakima that have been repaved in the last two years.

This year's online survey takers also gave Yakima a higher rating as a good place to live when compared to the 2013 number. Last year's rating for Yakima as a good place to live was 51% excellent/good+, up from 45% during the first year of the survey. That rating improved to 54% excellent/good+ in 2014.

In the first online survey in 2012, survey takers gave the overall direction Yakima was taking an 18% excellent/good+ rating. In 2013, that number jumped to 39% excellent/good+ and this year held relatively steady at 38%.

The overall feeling of safety category was added to the survey last year and received a 28% excellent/good+ rating. The 2014 survey takers gave the overall feeling of safety category a 33% excellent/good+ rating.

The value of services for taxes paid category rating dipped last year to 31% excellent/good+ after having been at 37% in the first year of the survey. The 2014 online survey results show that category returning to a 37% excellent/good+ rating.

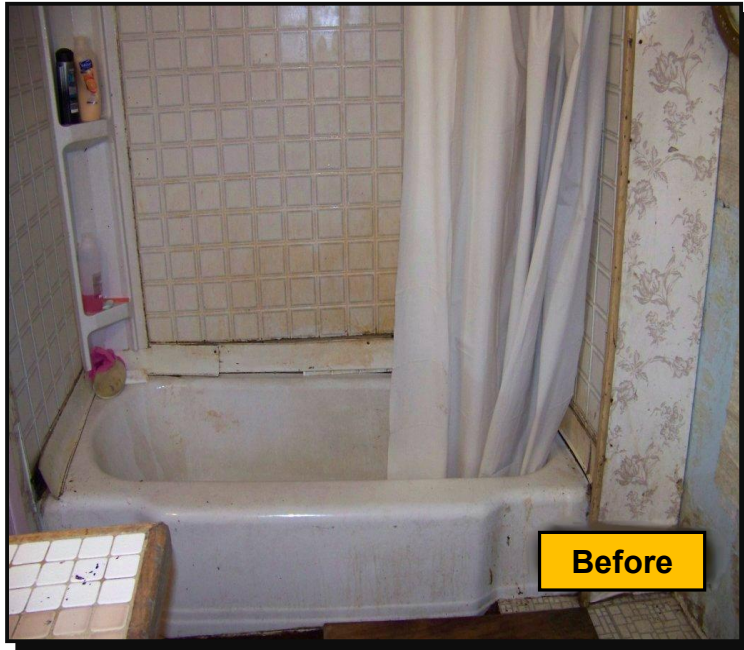
We've seen ratings in some areas improve considerably over the three years the City has been conducting the survey, said City Manager Tony Orourke. Improvements in other areas have been more conservative while others have held steady or slightly declined. Overall, though, survey takers seem to be saying that the City is moving in a positive direction, said Orourke.

Complete results of Phase 2 of the 2014 Yakima Citizen Survey, as well as Phase 1 results, can be seen on the City's website at the following link - <http://bit.ly/13hvs37>.

## **City Program Repairs Homes of Senior and Disabled Residents**

Through its Emergency Home Repair Program, the City of Yakima's Office of Neighborhood Development Services (ONDS) helps improve the lives of disabled residents and low-to-moderate-income seniors in the community.

The Emergency Home Repair Program has a big impact on the day-to-day lives of the people we help, said ONDS Manager Archie Matthews. We get a broken furnace working so they have heat. We unclog a sewer line so their toilet works. We upgrade a breaker box so the power supply is safe and reliable, said Matthews. We do both small things and big things, but they all make a difference in the quality of life for the people helped by the program.



***This bathroom wasn't functioning for several months. The family that lived in the house had to use a bathroom at a nearby mini-mart.***

Applications for the Emergency Home Repair Program can be picked up at the ONDS office, located at 112 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

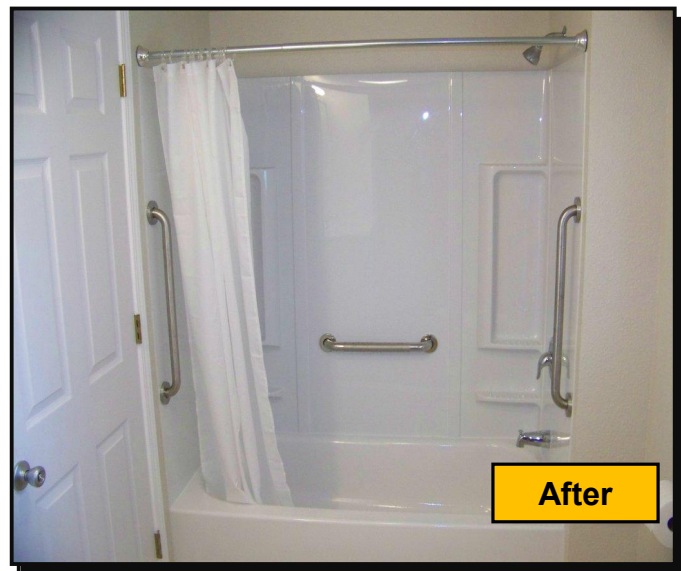
Or if people can't make it to our office, they can give us a call (575-6101) and one of our home remodel technicians will come to their home, do an on-site assessment of any needed repairs, and bring an application for the program with them, said Matthews. The technician can help homeowners fill out the application and answer any questions they may have.

Qualified homeowners may also be eligible for help with snow removal. Once the weather warms up, and if funding permits, assistance with yard cleanup may also be available to qualified homeowners.

Federal funding pays for the Emergency Home Repair Program. Homeowners interested in being part of the program have to apply. To qualify, applicants have to own or be buying a house within the Yakima city limits. Disabled residents have to meet Social Security guidelines and seniors have to meet income requirements established by the federal government.

All of the costs of eligible projects are paid for through the program. Grants are provided to qualified homeowners. There is no homeowner payback required.

Matthews estimates that about 100 homeowners were helped by the program in 2013, the most recent year from which complete statistics are available.



***Thanks to the ONDS Emergency Home Repair Program, the family now has a brand new bathroom.***

## **Gains in Yakima Airport Boardings Continue**

Throughout the spring, summer, and fall of this year, the number of people flying out of the Yakima Airport has continually increased when compared to data from recent years. Now that the busiest time of the year for the airport has arrived, there are strong indications that the positive trend will continue.

The latest boardings numbers are from November and show that more than 700 additional passengers got on a flight in Yakima last month compared to November 2013. That translates to 87% of available seats on Horizon Air flights from Yakima being filled last month. In November 2013, 75% of available seats were filled.

The latest uptick in boardings adds to the string of increases that have occurred since the City of Yakima, which owns the airport, launched a marketing campaign this spring. The \$70,000 FLY YKM+campaign, which was paid for by the City, ran through early fall. Historically, March through September are the slowest months for boardings at the Yakima Airport.



***A Horizon Air Bombardier Q400 turboprop leaves Yakima on its way to Sea-Tac International Airport. Boardings of Horizon flights out of Yakima have consistently increased this year.***

The number of boardings at the Yakima Airport is certainly heading in the right direction, said City of Yakima Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler. Because of that, the airport stands a good chance of getting more daily flights between Yakima and Sea-Tac and, potentially, even having a new flight added between Yakima and Portland. Those are the goals that are trying to be achieved and based on the progress that's been made so far this year, we're hopeful we'll get there, said Beehler.

During preliminary discussions earlier this year, representatives of Alaska Airlines, Horizon Air's parent company, told City officials that Alaska could consider adding a fourth daily flight between Yakima and Sea-Tac if the so-called

load factor for 2014 were to hit 75%. So far, this year's Horizon Air load factor, which is a combination of filled seats on flights both to and from Yakima, sits squarely on that number . 75%.

We're definitely encouraged, said Beehler. This is the time of year when we typically see the highest number of people flying in and out of the Yakima Airport. We're confident we will hit the 75% load factor mark for the year.

In October, the City was awarded a \$290,000 federal grant that will be used to expand the FLY YKM marketing campaign and to ensure that Alaska Airlines will generate revenue on any flights it may add in and out of the Yakima Airport. The City will match the grant with its own funds in order to maximize the positive effects of the marketing effort.



***If the trend of more people flying in and out of the Yakima Airport continues as it has this year, additional flights could be added.***