



City of Yakima

# NEWS RELEASE

**Subject: 2013 Yakima Citizen Survey Results**

**Contact: City Manager Tony O'Rourke – 575-6040**

**Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142**

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## **2013 Survey Results Show Focus Should Remain on Key Priorities**

In the summer of 2012, the Yakima City Council authorized the inaugural Yakima Citizen Survey to find out what community members thought about City services and to help identify areas that needed improvement. Results of that survey helped the Council establish a set of priorities that led to the redesign of City programs and services to address issues ranging from street repair and employment opportunities to crime prevention and Yakima's overall image.

The Council also committed last year to conduct follow up surveys on an annual basis for the foreseeable future in order to track progress and ensure that the City continues to focus on priorities that community members feel are key to Yakima's success.

Results from Phase 1 of the 2013 Yakima Citizen Survey, which took place in June and July of this year and involved questionnaires being mailed to 3000 randomly-selected households, demonstrate the highest priorities identified in the 2012 survey still remain at the top of the list.

Last year 837 mail-in surveys were turned in compared to the 762 that were sent back this year. Both surveys asked nearly identical questions and the vast majority of responses to the 2013 survey (73%) were consistent with those received last year. The City did get somewhat better ratings in 2013 on about 10% of the items in the survey while about 17% of the ratings went down slightly from 2012.

Yakima's overall image rating increased to 21% "excellent/good" compared to 19% last year while its overall appearance rating went from 29% "excellent/good" in 2012 to 28% this year. In 2012, 77% of survey respondents said they felt safe in their neighborhood during the day compared to 74% of the people who turned in a survey this year. Yakima's overall cleanliness rating jumped from 49% "excellent/good" last year to 56% in 2013, the quality of City services rating increased from 45% "excellent/good" in 2012 to 47% this year, and the overall direction of the City rating changed from 28% "excellent/good" last year to 31% this year.

Street repair received a 22% "excellent/good" rating in 2012 compared to a 19% "excellent/good" rating in 2013. In the 2013 survey results, more people (29%) reported being a victim of a crime than did in 2012 (26%), and fewer people (37%) rated shopping opportunities in Yakima as "excellent/good" this year than did in last year's survey (39%).

"The results of this year's survey clearly show that while the City is on the right track, there's still more work to do when it comes to improving public safety, expanding economic development opportunities, fixing infrastructure issues, and creating a positive reputation for Yakima," said City Manager Tony O'Rourke. "We'll take the latest results to heart and use them to continue moving forward."

In mid July, Phase 2 of the 2013 Yakima Citizen Survey began when the questionnaire was made available through the City website. The online survey was closed on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and results from that phase of this year's process are expected to be compiled by the end of this month.