



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: Cascade and Senator Apartments

Contact: Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142

Release Date: Monday, July 15th, 2013

Cascade and Senator Apartments No Longer Subject to Vacation Order

Because faulty fire alarm system concerns have now been resolved, the City of Yakima has formally notified the owner of the Cascade and Senator buildings that the apartments in the two Downtown Yakima properties will not have to be vacated by Thursday, July 18th.

The City had originally told the owner of the two buildings on June 28th that problems with the fire alarm systems, as well as other code violations, had led to a determination that the Cascade and Senator apartments had to be vacated by Tuesday, July 9th. In light of some progress having been made to address the fire and life safety code violations, the City extended the first vacation deadline until Friday, July 12th. Then, after additional steps were taken to improve conditions in the buildings, including the owner agreeing to meet strict criteria established by the City for a 24-hour-a-day fire watch to be put in place until the fire alarm systems were fully functional, the vacation deadline was pushed to Thursday, July 18th.

Since then, work has been done to make the fire alarms systems work properly, so the City has lifted the requirement for the around-the-clock fire watch and notified the owner of the buildings that the pending vacation order will not be issued.

In mid-December of last year, the City's Codes Division notified the owner of the two Downtown Yakima buildings that several fire and life safety issues, including faulty fire alarm systems, holes in walls, and electrical problems, had to be addressed or the apartments in the Senator and the Cascade would have to be vacated. As of late June, only minimal progress has been made to take care of the numerous code violations, so the City began taking the steps necessary to issue a formal vacation order.

"We're pleased that the owner of the Cascade and Senator buildings finally took the City seriously and did what needed to be done to make the apartments safe for the people who live in them," said City Manager Tony O'Rourke. "The goal all along has been to make sure that the dangerous conditions that were first identified last December were corrected. That goal has now been accomplished," said O'Rourke. "It's unfortunate that getting the owner to take responsibility for the safety of the buildings caused stress for the tenants as well for other people. Hopefully this experience has made it clear that the City intends to hold property owners accountable to meet fire and life safety code requirements."

- end -