



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: Chris Waarvick Retirement

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Longtime Yakima Public Works Director Chris Waarvick to Retire in July

After a career with the City of Yakima that has spanned more than three decades, including the last 15 years in the role of Public Works Director, Chris Waarvick will retire at the end of July.

Waarvick told City Manager Tony O'Rourke that he's retiring now in order to spend more time with his family and to have a greater opportunity to pursue a favorite activity of his – traveling.

"Chris has been an outstanding asset to the City of Yakima throughout his career," said O'Rourke. "He's been an invaluable source of information for me and has provided a strong sense of stability since I came to the City last year. He will definitely be missed because of his significant experience and vast institutional knowledge," said O'Rourke. "We certainly wish Chris all the best and thank him for his many years of outstanding service to the Yakima community."

Waarvick was originally hired by the City as a Wastewater Pretreatment Technician in August of 1980. He was promoted to the position of Sewer Maintenance Supervisor about two years later. In June of 1984, Waarvick was again promoted to serve as the City's Acting Wastewater Division Manager. In October of that year, "Acting" was removed from Waarvick's title as he became the City's Wastewater Division Manager. After another longtime Public Works Director retired in February of 1998, Waarvick was appointed to serve as Acting Public Works Director. Then in July of 1998, he was promoted to the position of Public Works Director and has overseen one of the City's largest departments ever since.

O'Rourke has decided to have current City Wastewater Division Manager Scott Schafer serve in the position of Acting Public Works Director once Waarvick retires. When Schafer takes on those duties, current Utility Engineer Shelley Willson will step in as Acting Wastewater Division Manager.

O'Rourke plans on determining how to fill the Public Works Director position on a permanent basis within the next six months.

Schafer has worked for the City since July of 1996 when he was hired as a Lab Technician in the Wastewater Division. He was promoted to the position of Environmental Analyst in the Wastewater Division in September of 2003 and then to the position of Assistant Wastewater Division Manager in July of 2005. In September of 2008, Schafer was named to serve as the Acting Wastewater Division Manager and became the City's Wastewater Division Manager in February of 2009.

Willson was first hired by the City as a Traffic Technician in April of 1983. She was promoted to the position of Supervising Traffic Engineer about seven years later. After serving in an acting capacity for six months, Willson became the City's Streets and Traffic Division Manager in January of 1999. Since December of 2007, she has worked primarily on stormwater issues as a Utility Engineer in the Wastewater Division.

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