



City of Yakima

# NEWS RELEASE

**Subject: Director of Utilities and Engineering Selection**  
**Contact: City Manager Tony O'Rourke – 575-6040**  
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## Debbie Cook Named Director of Utilities and Engineering

Yakima City Manager Tony O'Rourke has selected Debbie Cook to become the City's new Director of Utilities and Engineering. Cook, who is currently the Development Services Engineering Manager for the City of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, expects to be on the job in Yakima in late January.

Cook will join the City of Yakima after having spent more than 26 years working for both public sector employers and for private engineering companies. Cook has spent most of her career in Washington State.

"Debbie brings a very strong public and private sector background to the City of Yakima," said O'Rourke. "She is well qualified to lead the City's efforts to optimize its engineering and utilities operations. We had a strong field of candidates apply for the position," said O'Rourke. "The City is fortunate to be able to have someone of Debbie's caliber join the senior management team and help us continue to enhance how the City does business."

Cook graduated in 1984 from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Engineering. From 1984 to 1986, she completed course work toward a Master of Science in Civil Engineering degree at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. In 1991, Cook earned a Master of Business Administration degree from City University in Seattle.

Cook went to work in 1986 as an Associate Engineer for the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, which would later merge with King County, coordinating wastewater treatment plant expansions in Renton and West Point. Cook then served as a Project Engineer for the Port of Port Townsend on a variety of projects including a moderate risk waste facility, dock upgrades, marine sanitation facilities, and boat ramps. Cook worked as a Senior Project Engineer for Zambrana Engineering, Inc., a private firm based in St. Louis, before returning to the public sector as a Project Control Engineer for the King County Department of Natural Resources.

From 2000 to 2006, Cook worked for URS Corporation, an international engineering, construction, and technical services company. While with URS, Cook served in a variety of capacities on projects ranging from school and parks facilities in California to asbestos cleanup at SeaTac Airport and construction of a commuter rail station in Tukwila.

In 2006, Cook was hired by the City of Rio Rancho, which has a population of about 90,000, as a Construction Manager in the Public Works Department. In her current role as Rio Rancho's Development Services Engineering Manager, Cook oversees public and private infrastructure projects.

As the City of Yakima's Director of Utilities and Engineering, Cook will be paid \$115,000 a year and will be responsible for a department that will include the Engineering Division, the Water/Irrigation Division, and the Wastewater Division. The 2013 operating and capital budgets for the Utilities and Engineering Department total \$61.2 million.

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