



Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

✦ Generosity of Local Service Clubs Makes a Big Difference for Parks

Over the past several years, local service clubs have invested a significant amount of time and a considerable amount of money, which combined have gone a long way toward improving multiple Yakima parks. Between them, over the last six years Rotary Club members, Kiwanis Club members, and Lions Club members have donated an impressive total of nearly \$1.6 million in labor and money for a variety of projects ranging from playgrounds to basketball courts, picnic shelters to a skate park.

It's absolutely incredible how generous our local service clubs have been, said Yakima Parks and Recreation Manager Ken Wilkinson. It is no exaggeration to say that the City alone simply would not have been able to make the high level of investment in parks that we've enjoyed in recent years were it not for the outstanding philanthropy demonstrated by Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions club members, said Wilkinson.

Kiwanis Park in Southeast Yakima has been dramatically transformed thanks to the nearly \$1 million Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions members have contributed in labor and money to buy land for the park's expansion (\$360,000), sports facility development and the construction of concession stands and restrooms, (\$300,000), a new playground (\$200,000), a skate park (\$50,000), basketball courts (\$30,000), and a picnic shelter (\$25,000).

Franklin Park has seen \$317,000 in improvements over the last couple of years including the Yakima Sunrise Rotary Pavilion (\$200,000), which is used for a variety of corporate and private events and as a performance venue, the Downtown Yakima Rotary Club Playground (\$87,000), and the Southwest Yakima Rotary Club picnic/shade structures (\$30,000).

Last year, the three Yakima Rotary clubs provided a total of \$210,000 to demolish a dilapidated food bank building adjacent to Southwest Community Park and build the new Yakima Rotary Food Bank.

The Southwest Yakima Rotary Club has also provided \$20,000 for a new picnic shelter at Miller Park and \$2,000 for Yakima Park's Beyond the Bell after-school program.

At Randall Park, where a number of improvements are currently being made, the Downtown Yakima Lions Club has provided \$25,000 for a walking trail bridge and the Southwest Yakima Rotary Club in donating \$60,000 in labor and money to build a new pond observation deck.

The service clubs have demonstrated a real commitment to Yakima's parks, said Wilkinson. They deserve our thanks because the whole community is benefitting from their generosity.



The Yakima Sunrise Rotary Club Pavilion is just one example of nearly \$1.6 million in improvements made to Yakima parks thanks to donated labor and money from local Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions club members.

Procurement Manager Named to Organization's Leadership Post

City of Yakima/Yakima County Procurement Manager Sue Ownby was recently elected to serve as vice president of the Washington Chapter of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP). Ownby has been actively involved in the chapter since it was founded 10 years ago. She previously served as the organization's vice president in 2005 and has chaired the group's Public Relations & Marketing Committee for the last nine years.

Sue has dedicated a lot of time and effort to improving and enhancing the public procurement profession, said City of Yakima Finance Director Cindy Epperson. Her significant involvement in the state chapter of the NIGP is just another example of that commitment.



City of Yakima/Yakima County Procurement Manager Sue Ownby will serve this year as the vice president of the Washington State Chapter of the National Governmental Purchasing Institute.

The Washington State Chapter of the NIGP has more than 250 member agencies including cities, counties, state agencies, higher education institutions, school districts, transit authorities, ports, and other special purpose districts. The NIGP includes more than 3,000 member agencies worldwide and more than 15,000 individual procurement professionals. The NIGP provides extensive training opportunities to its members, maintains a large library of purchasing documents, offers consulting services, and conducts research into best practices in the public procurement profession.

Ownby oversees all purchasing for both the City and Yakima County. The City and County consolidated their purchasing operations in 2009, a process that was led by Ownby. The City of Yakima/Yakima County Procurement Division is one of only a few combined city/county purchasing operations in the country.

The consolidation process was challenging, said Ownby. But it was made much more manageable because of the assistance we got from NIGP consultants. Two consultants from the NIGP spent a great deal of time evaluating a proposed merger of the City of Yakima and Yakima County purchasing divisions and wrote a comprehensive report that detailed the potential operational and financial efficiencies, staffing requirements, technological enhancements, and organizational and procedural changes associated with consolidation, said Ownby. That report truly guided us through the transition from two separate operations to a single entity.

Ownby began her professional career as a clerk in the Yakima County Auditor's office in 1984 before joining the County's purchasing office as an accounting technician later that same year. In 1988, Ownby was hired by the City of Yakima as a buyer in the Purchasing Division. In 1995, she was promoted to the position of purchasing agent after having served in an acting capacity for about a year. In 1998, Ownby's title was changed to purchasing manager and in 2009 she became the City of Yakima/Yakima County procurement manager as part of the consolidation of the two operations.

The combined City of Yakima/Yakima County Purchasing Division provides services to a total of more than 60 City and County divisions and departments and oversees the purchase of more than \$50 million in goods and services annually.

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 (55 or older) 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. It's both small things and big things, but they all make a difference in the quality of life for the people helped by the program.

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 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.



This Yakima home had several issues including a failing roof and peeling paint.



Through the ONDS Emergency Home Repair Program, a new roof was installed and the home was repainted at no cost to the owner.

Matthews estimates that about 100 homeowners were helped by the program in 2014.

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

If someone 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.



Be Part of the Solution!

You can serve your community by becoming part of a citizen board, committee, or commission. To learn more, contact the City of Yakima Clerk's office by phone (575-6037) or e-mail (sonya.claartee@yakimawa.gov).

Yakima is our community – Be Part of the Solution!