



City of Yakima



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GAP**

News Release

Subject: Fire Class Ratings Improve for Yakima, Union Gap

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Release Date: Tuesday, December 26th, 2017

Fire Class Ratings Improve for Yakima, Union Gap

Insurance premiums may be decreasing in 2018 for property owners in Yakima and Union Gap.

The two cities received good news recently when the non-profit Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau improved their respective fire class ratings. The information is used by many insurance underwriters to determine the cost of premiums.

The Yakima Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical response services to the City of Union Gap through a partnership agreement that was first put in place in about three years ago. Officials from both cities point to services improvements resulting from the partnership agreement, specifically an enhanced fire inspection program, as contributing to the better fire protection class ratings.

Yakima's fire protection class rating improved to 3 from a 4 the previous year. The rating uses a scale of 1-10, with 10 reflecting little or no fire protection capability and 1 signifying the highest level of capability. Union Gap saw its rating improve to a 4 from a 5 the previous inspection.

The Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau reviews fire departments every five years and sets its ratings based on several factors. They include fire department operations, water system capabilities, communications technology, and fire safety control.

The new ratings take effect March 1, 2018.

"The improved class rating is gratifying given the efforts we have made over the past four years to improve virtually every aspect of the department's operations, most notably the significant enhancements to our fire inspection program," said Yakima Fire Chief Bob Stewart.

Those efforts have benefitted not only the City of Yakima, but Union Gap as well with its improved fire class rating.

"This will make a huge difference for our commercial customers," said Union Gap City Manager Arlene Fisher. "It is absolutely a win-win for us and the City of Yakima. This partnership has been a great enhancement for both entities."

The service agreement with Yakima has been operational since January 2015. The two cities recently renewed the agreement for three more years, with an option to extend for an additional two years until December 2022

Fisher said Union Gap city staff will insert flyers in residents' utility statements with information about the new rating. The information will also be published in the City of Union Gap's next newsletter.