

# Issues Brief

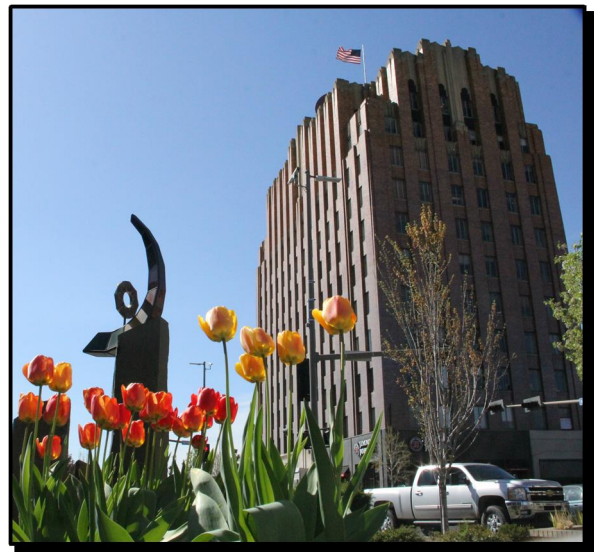
City of Yakima e-Newsletter

## ✦ Downtown Yakima Secures "Main Street" Status

Thanks to the hard work of downtown boosters, Yakima has been named a Washington State Main Street Community. The Downtown Association of Yakima completed the extensive application process in mid-December and was notified that its application had been approved by the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation earlier this month.

"It was a lot of hard work," said Victor De Long, who serves as president of the private, non-profit Downtown Association of Yakima that was formed last year. "We had to develop a mission statement, show commitment to historic preservation, and actively operate with a board of directors."

One major benefit of receiving the Main Street designation is that businesses who support downtown revitalization efforts are given tax breaks. Under the program, a private businesses that donates to a Main Street organization can receive a business and occupation tax credit equal to 75% of the donation. However, in order to receive those funds, the Downtown Association of Yakima will need to hire a full-time director and meet a variety of performance benchmarks.



***Yakima has been named a Washington State Main Street Community, which will help continue downtown revitalization.***

"We are already in the process of forming committees to keep the ball rolling," said De Long. "Our goal is to complement, rather than compete with, the City of Yakima, which has taken the lead role in recent years by sponsoring community events and activities aimed at bringing people into the downtown core area."

Some of those events include the Downtown Summer Nights Concert Series, the Yakima Blues and Local Brews Bash, the Lunchtime Live Concert Series, the Viva la Musica Concert Series, and the Fresh Hop Ale Festival.

The Main Street program uses a four-point approach to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort. The program focuses on economic restructuring (retaining current, and attracting new, businesses), design (creating a safe and inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors), organization (building partnerships), and downtown promotion (creating a positive image).

The Main Street program also serves as a resource center that provides information, guidance, and training to help communities with downtown revitalization. There are nearly three dozen Main Street communities in Washington State including Selah, Ellensburg, Prosser, Kennewick, and Walla Walla.

## **Survey Asks Consumers About a Potential Market/Incubator/Kitchen**

Since the Yakima City Council adopted the Downtown Yakima Master Plan in 2013, progress has certainly been made on several of the concepts identified in the plan. The City has created new downtown events like the Downtown Summer Nights, Lunchtime Live, and Viva la Musica concert series. Planning is also well underway on a downtown central plaza. Now, the City is focusing on another of the ideas included in the master plan, a combined public market, food business incubator, and shared commercial kitchen facility.



***Pybus Market, which opened in Wenatchee in spring 2013, operates year 'round and has become popular with locals and tourists alike.***

The survey asks where people buy their groceries and produce, how often they eat out, how frequently they go to a public market or specialty food store, where they think a combined market, incubator, and kitchen facility should be located, and other information that will be used to help determine the viability of such a facility.

The survey is available in both English and Spanish on the City's website at <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/economic-development/>. The survey will be open until February 6<sup>th</sup>.

Successful examples of combined public market, business incubator, and shared commercial kitchen facilities include Pybus Market in Wenatchee and Pike Place Market in Seattle.

Pybus and Pike Place are, obviously, on opposite ends of the size scale, but both demonstrate how a combined market, incubator, and commercial kitchen concept can become an economic driver, can help to define the character of a community, and can be successful financially, said City of Yakima Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins.

Both Pybus Market and Pike Place Market are operated by non-profit organizations. According to Hawkins, a similar organizational structure is being considered for the potential Yakima facility.

Last August, the City conducted two surveys as part of determining if there was interest in a market/incubator/kitchen facility in Yakima. One of the surveys was targeted at potential public market vendors while the other was aimed at potential users of the incubator elements of the facility and commercial kitchen. Hawkins said results of those two surveys indicated there are a lot of possible local tenants for a market as well as users of an incubator and kitchen.

Now we need to hear from potential customers to find out what would draw them to that kind of facility in Yakima, said Hawkins. That's why we need as many people as possible to fill out the consumer survey.



***The world famous Pike Place Market in Seattle has played a key role in the recent growth of neighborhoods like Belltown, the waterfront, and the Western Avenue area.***

Results of the consumer survey, along with those from the August surveys, will be shared with the community during a public meeting that will be held in the next few months

## Yakima Airport Hits Target for Increased Passengers in 2014

The goal established by the City of Yakima to increase the number of passengers flying in and out of the Yakima Airport in 2014 has been met and exceeded. Last year's target for the so-called load factor was 75%. The load factor is a measure of the percentage of seats that are filled on flights to and from an airport.

Yakima Airport's load factor for 2014 came in at 76%. That means about 3000 more people flew in and out of the Yakima Airport last year than did in 2013.

We were confident that the 75% goal could be met because we saw steady increases in passenger loads throughout the year, said City of Yakima Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler. To have the final number be even higher, even if it's just by one percentage point, is certainly encouraging. The City focused on getting the load factor number up and it was successful, said Beehler. That positions the airport very well for growth in the number of flights to and from Yakima.



*A Horizon Air Bombardier Q400 turboprop makes its way to the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on a flight from Yakima in the fall of 2014. Passenger loads on flights to and from the Yakima Airport increased from 71% in 2013 to 76% in 2014.*

The Yakima Airport is served by one commercial airline, Horizon Air. During informal discussions last year, representatives of Horizon Air's parent company, Alaska Airlines, told City officials that it could consider adding an additional flight to the three daily flights Horizon now makes between Yakima and Seattle if the load factor increased from 71% in 2013 to 75% or greater in 2014. The potential for a flight from Yakima to Portland was also discussed.

Beehler said that part of the credit for the increase in the number of people using the Yakima Airport can be attributed to a marketing campaign the City and Alaska Airlines partnered on last year.

The City invested \$75,000 in the FLY YKM campaign last year, and that seems to have been money well spent, said Beehler. In October of 2014, the City was awarded a \$290,000 federal grant to enhance the FLY YKM marketing effort this year and to ensure that Alaska Airlines will generate revenue on any flights in may add in and out of the Yakima Airport. The City is going to match that grant amount with an equal amount in order to maximize the positive effects of the campaign, said Beehler.

More discussions between the City and Alaska Airlines about boosting the number of flights in and out of Yakima are expected to take place over the next few months.



*Be Part of the Solution*

Serve your community by volunteering for a City of Yakima citizen board, committee, or commission. Apply on the City website at <http://bit.ly/1AcVayr> or call the City Clerk's office at 575-6000.

**Yakima is our community – Be Part of the Solution!**