



Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

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 the 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.

Matthews estimates that about 100 homeowners were helped by the program in 2015.

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.



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

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.

Tamara Hanlon Appointed New Municipal Court Commissioner

The City of Yakima's Municipal Court has a new court commissioner. Tamara Hanlon was sworn in as the City's court commissioner on Friday, January 8th during a ceremony at the Richard A. Zais Law & Justice Center.

As a part-time (20 hours per week) court commissioner, Hanlon will hear misdemeanor court cases just as the City's two full-time judges do. The court currently has two full-time judges, Judge Susan Woodard and Judge Kelley Olwell.

We are very pleased to welcome Commissioner Hanlon to the City of Yakima Municipal Court, said Judge Woodard, who is the current presiding judge for the court. She is extraordinarily well qualified to serve the community as a court commissioner.

Hanlon was born in Seattle and grew up in Mukilteo and Everett. After graduating from Mariner High School in Everett, she attended Washington State University, from which she graduated in 1995 cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. She received her juris doctorate from the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis & Clark College, located in Portland, Oregon, in 1998. Hanlon served as an associate editor of *Environmental Law*, a quarterly publication of the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis & Clark College, and as co-author of *Ninth Circuit Review*, which is published once a year by the school.

While still in law school, Hanlon worked as a volunteer law clerk for the Fish Refuge Working Group, which provided information about the federal Clean Water Act and water body designations to the governor of Oregon. She also served as a clerk for private law offices in both Portland and West Linn, Oregon as well as for the U.S. Attorney's office in Seattle.



Tamara Hanlon was sworn in on January 8th as the City of Yakima's latest municipal court commissioner.

After graduating from law school with honors, Hanlon was hired by the Benton County Prosecuting Attorney's office headquartered in Kennewick. There she prosecuted felony cases, specializing in child rape and molestation cases as well as domestic violence cases. Hanlon also worked on felony drug court cases the last two years she worked for Benton County.

In 2007, the Yakima County Prosecuting Attorney's office hired Hanlon as a felony trial attorney responsible for homicide cases, serious violent crime offenses, and child sexual assault cases. Over the past two years, Hanlon has handled felony criminal appeals for Yakima County, having argued before both the Court of Appeals, Division 3 and the Washington State Supreme Court.

Hanlon replaces Marty Dixon as the Yakima Municipal Court commissioner. Dixon served in the role over the last two years. Hanlon will continue working for the Yakima County Prosecuting Attorney's office while serving as the Yakima Municipal Court commissioner.

The City has operated a municipal court since 1997.

✦ Smoke Alarms Save Lives, But Only If They're Working

The evidence is undeniable. Smoke alarms save lives. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), your chance of surviving a home fire doubles if your house has working smoke alarms.

The NFPA reports that over a three-year survey period, it found that there were no smoke alarms installed in houses involved in 40% of home fires that resulted in the death of one or more people. That statistic alone is cause for serious concern. What's even more distressing is that another 23% of home fire deaths during the same period took place in houses that DID have at least one smoke alarm installed. Confused?

Obviously, for a smoke alarm to do its job, it has to be in working condition, said Yakima Fire Department Captain Jeff Pfaff. Unfortunately, too many people disconnect their smoke alarm batteries or just don't replace them before they lose their charge, said Pfaff. People often disconnect smoke alarm batteries because they get annoyed when an alarm is set off by smoke from cooking food or for some other faulty reason, said Pfaff.

The NFPA says that its research shows that in a full 75% of instances in which smoke alarms did not go off during a home fire, it was because either the batteries were missing, had been disconnected, or were dead.

To minimize so-called nuisance alarms caused by cooking fumes or another faulty reason, the NFPA recommends installing smoke alarms with hush buttons. Nuisance alarms caused by smoke from cooking or other reasons can be hushed using such buttons so homeowners are less likely to disconnect alarm batteries.

People might also consider installing dual sensor alarms, said Pfaff. Ionization-based alarms, are more responsive to flaming fires and photoelectric-based alarms pick up smoldering fires better. A dual sensor alarm uses both ionization and photoelectric technologies, said Pfaff. It's the best of both worlds.

The United States Fire Administration recommends that all smoke alarms be replaced when they are 10 years old. The newest alarms on the market contain Lithium Ion batteries that last 10 years, so there is not a need to replace batteries during the life of the alarm. The United States Fire Administration's campaign, "Hear the beep where you sleep," recommends that every bedroom needs a smoke alarm. Pfaff says that roughly 50% of home fire deaths are reported at night between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most people are asleep. A working smoke alarm in each bedroom increases your odds of survival.

To make sure the batteries in your smoke alarms are working properly, Pfaff says you should test alarms at least once a month. An easy way to do that, says Pfaff, is to perform alarm checks on the first day of each month as a regular routine, and replace the batteries every 6 months to ensure they work when you need them. Placing smoke alarms in each room and every bedroom of the house, as well as installing carbon monoxide alarms in homes that use gas or any other combustible fuel, also increases your safety.



A smoke alarm that is properly installed in your house and is working correctly doubles your chance of surviving a home fire.