



January 2017

Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

✦ Mayor Coffey Looks Forward to Progress Being Made in 2017

** Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles written by Yakima City Council members that will be published each month in the City of Yakima Issues Brief e-Newsletter.*

It has been my distinct pleasure to have served our community as a member of the Yakima City Council since 2008. I was truly honored to have been chosen by my fellow Council members in August of 2016 to become Yakima's mayor. My grandfather, Gilbert Burns, served as Yakima's mayor in the 1950s and I am proud to have been given the opportunity to build on his legacy.

The past year has been filled with many challenges and changes for the City of Yakima. The beginning of 2016 brought with it four new members to the Yakima City Council. Those four new members, Avina Gutiérrez, Carmen Méndez, Dulce Gutiérrez and Holly Cousens, have provided much needed energy, enthusiasm, and ideas to the City Council.

In July of last year, the City welcomed Cliff Moore as the new city manager. Mr. Moore's experience, insight, and measured approach in addressing significant issues has established a firm foundation upon which the City can build as it moves forward.

During the year ahead, the City Council will be taking important steps to stimulate economic development, ensure community members are safe, strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones, and specifically focus on improving neighborhoods.



Kathy Coffey, now representing District #5, is in her third term on the Yakima City Council and in August 2016 was chosen by her fellow Council members to serve as mayor.

In 2017, sidewalk improvement projects will make it easier and safer for kids to get to school. The Council will actively engage the community to become more involved in shaping City policy through two exploratory committees that have been formed to explore ethics and equal rights as well as community integration. The City Council will also consider a new economic development strategic plan aimed at making Yakima more competitive in its efforts to attract new businesses. And, 2017 will see the City Council continuing to focus on providing the highest quality law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency services possible.

Throughout this year, I encourage everyone who calls Yakima home to provide feedback and input to me and the rest of the City Council so the many and varied voices in our community are heard and considered as the Council goes about the important work of developing programs, services, and policies that will help Yakima continue to be the special place that it is.

Thank you for the trust you have put in me and my fellow Council members. We are committed to making decisions that benefit the entire Yakima community in the coming year and into the future.

High School Seniors Encouraged to Apply for \$1000 AWC Scholarship

The City of Yakima is encouraging area high school seniors to apply for a \$1000 scholarship being offered by the Association of Washington Cities ("AWC"). The AWC 2017 Center for Quality Communities Scholarship will be awarded to six high school seniors this spring.

The AWC Center for Quality Communities promotes municipal leadership and civic engagement. The Center, which is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, helps community members understand the important role their cities and towns play in Washington state. The Center believes in supporting the education of student leaders who care about their communities. The AWC Center for Quality Communities Scholarship supports high school students who are actively engaged in their community and/or city government.



Yakima area high school seniors are encouraged to apply for a \$1000 scholarship being offered by the Association of Washington Cities Center for Quality Communities by filling out an application form on the City of Yakima website at yakimawa.gov.

The AWC provides a variety of services to the 281 cities and towns in Washington state. Each of those cities and towns is eligible to select one scholarship applicant, whose application is then forwarded to the AWC office in Olympia. A committee formed by the AWC then makes the final decision about which six applicants will receive scholarships.

The City of Yakima's website front page includes a link to information about the eligibility requirements for

the AWC Center for Quality Communities Scholarship, an application form, the date applications must be submitted, etc. The City's website front page can be accessed at yakimawa.gov.

Under the criteria that the City of Yakima established, the AWC scholarship is open to students in the Yakima School District and West Valley School District who:

- Will graduate from high school, complete home school, or receive a GED in spring/summer 2017
- Are currently or have been involved in significant school/community leadership activities and/or city government
- Plan to continue their education in the 2017-2018 academic year at an accredited college, community college, or trade school on a half-time or more basis
- Are residents of Washington state

Applications for the AWC Center for Quality Communities Scholarship **are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, February 17th, 2017**. Completed scholarship applications should be sent by postal mail to:

Randy Beehler
Communications & Public Affairs Director
City of Yakima, Wa.
Yakima, Wa. 98901

Yakima-area scholarship application packets will be review, evaluated, and scored by a committee consisting of Yakima Mayor Kathy Coffey, Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler, and Assistant to the City Manager Cally Price.

For more information about the AWC scholarship process, contact Randy Beehler by phone (901-1142) or by e-mail (randy.beehler@yakimawa.gov).

"Yak Back" Feature on City's Website Continues to Grow in Popularity

More and more people are discovering an easy way to notify the City of Yakima about problems and issues is by using the "Yak Back" feature on the City's website.

First established in 2012, Yak Back now receives an average of more than 1,000 submittals each year. Usage jumped more than 13% in 2016, with nearly 1,200 Yak Back requests being received.

Yak Back can be accessed from the front page of the City of Yakima website at yakimawa.gov. Users can leave contact information or report issues anonymously.

Graffiti complaints top the list of requests for service, but the system is also popular for reporting problems with street lights, traffic signals, parking issues and potholes.

So far in 2017, complaints about snow-related problems have been the most frequent being reported on Yak Back.

One major goal of Yak Back is to resolve problems quickly.

"The City promises to respond to a Yak Back request within 48 hours of its being received," said

Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler. "We may not be able to resolve an issue as quickly as that, but we will, at the very least, let the person who submitted a Yak Back request know that we received it and are taking appropriate action. Once we are able to resolve an issue, we contact the person who submitted the request again and let them know it has been handled," said Beehler.

In 2016, nearly 90% of issues reported through Yak Back were taken care of within two business days or fewer.

Yak Back also allows residents to phone in their concerns or report problems by calling 575-3535 and leaving a message. In addition, the "Feedback" feature on Yak Back permits users to e-mail requests directly to any City office or department.

Yak Back is just one of many ways the City uses to stay in touch with the community. Other ways to stay connected include the official City of Yakima Facebook page and the official City of Yakima Twitter feed.



The "Yak Back" feature on the City of Yakima website is a popular way for community members to report problems, like potholes or other roadway-related issues, to share feedback with the City, or to provide suggestions about City programs, services, and policies.

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).