



June 2014

# Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

## ✦ Take the Bus for Free to Take a Dip in the Pool This Summer

Yakima Transit and Yakima Parks and Recreation have teamed up to make it easier for swimmers to use Franklin and Lions pools this summer.

From now until August 23<sup>rd</sup>, paying to swim in one of Yakima's two City-owned pools entitles the purchaser to a special Yakima Transit bus pass. Each pass is good for two tickets to ride Yakima Transit and that means free transportation all summer to swim.

"It's a win-win situation for everyone," says Yakima Transit Marketing Administrator Karen Allen, who came up with the idea. "Bus ridership is lower in the summertime when school is out, so there are seats available to handle swimmers. We like to be involved in programs that increase bus ridership and, hopefully, get more people in the habit of hopping on the bus to get where they want to go. This seemed like a natural partnership between Yakima Transit and Yakima Parks and Rec," said Allen.



**Franklin Pool welcomes swimmers all summer long. This year, everyone who pays to get in to Franklin Pool or Lions Pool will also get two free passes to ride Yakima Transit. The hope is more people will ride the bus not just to the pools, but to other locations in town.**

A lack of transportation often prevents kids and adults from being able to swim as much as they would like during the summer months. "This helps solve that problem," says Yakima Parks and Recreation Manager Ken Wilkinson. "We are very excited about the opportunity to increase the number of people utilizing our pools."

Admission to both Franklin Pool and Lions Pool costs \$2.00 for youth and \$3.75 for adults. Punch cards and three-month passes are also available.

Franklin Pool opened on Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup> and offers a variety of aquatic activities including swimming lessons, water walking, lap swims and recreational swimming. Lions Pool is open year round and offers similar classes and activities to those at Franklin. Additional information is available on the Yakima Parks and Recreation website at <http://www.yakimaparks.com/aquatics/> or by calling Franklin Pool at 575-6035 or Lions Pool at 575-6046.

Yakima Transit runs seven days a week and schedule information is available online at [www.yakimatransit.org](http://www.yakimatransit.org) or by calling 575-6175.

## City and County Employees Meet the Fitness Challenge

From mid-March through early June, employees from the City of Yakima and Yakima County were engaged in a healthy competition . literally.

About 30 City employees and about 30 County employees squared off in the 2014 12-Week Fitness Challenge+to see which group and which individuals could lose the most weight and make improvements in overall fitness. The teams met three or four times a week to work out under the guidance of Laura Menke and Nasser Manassra from Gym on Wheels. At times during the challenge, City and County employees worked out together.



***From left to right, Yakima Mayor Micah Cawley and City employees Miguel Valladares, Mike Dodd, and Penny Foster show off the trophy the City team was awarded for winning the 2014 City/County Fitness Challenge.***

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, the final challenge results were announced during a celebration at Performance Park in Downtown Yakima. Overall, City employees shed more than 262 pounds, which represented a more than 3.5% weight loss and earned the City team a trophy. County employees dropped a total of 141 pounds, which added up to a more than 2.25% weight loss.

The biggest individual weight loss title went to City Solid Waste Driver Miguel Valladares, who is now 41 pounds lighter than he was at the start of the challenge. The County's top weight loss honor went to Financial Services Assistant Director Forrest Smith, who shed 29 pounds.

The idea of the Fitness Challenge was to inspire employees and their families to make better choices about nutrition and exercise so that they can live healthier, happier lives,+said City Permit Technician Julia Cruz, who is a member of the City's Wellness Committee and helped coordinate the challenge. There is plenty of evidence that healthier, happier employees are more productive at work. So, the challenge is truly an example of a win-win situation for both the people who went through it as well as for the City and County,+said Cruz.

City Finance and Budget Director Cindy Epperson decided to join the Fitness Challenge for a very personal reason.

My 3-year-old grandson weighs almost 40 pounds, and it was difficult for me to physically handle him,+said Epperson. Grandma time often ended with a trip to the chiropractor. Now, after completing the Fitness Challenge, my back is much stronger and the minor chronic pain that I had is virtually gone. The biggest payoff,+said Epperson, is I can pick up my grandson now without any trouble at all. How great is that?+

While Epperson wasn't among the top weight losers, she doubled the number of sit-ups and pushups she can do, lowered her blood pressure, and learned better nutrition practices. Those kinds of results were typical for the City and County employees who rose to the challenge.

Based on the success of this year's Fitness Challenge, Cruz said plans are in the works to make the challenge an annual event and potentially expand it to include other employers in the Yakima area.

## **Casino Donation Will Help Pay for Smoke Detectors**

Thanks to a \$3,500 dollar donation from Yakama Legends Casino, the Yakima Fire Department has additional funding available to purchase smoke detectors. The life saving devices will be made available at no cost to Yakima residents who are unable to afford them.

"The lack of smoke detectors is a real problem in the city," said Yakima Fire Department Captain Tom Schneider. "It can be a matter of life and death for people, and a working smoke detector does save lives."

Nationally, statistics show that three out of five home fire deaths result from fires in properties without a smoke detector.

While smoke detectors may be installed, the fact that they may not be working properly is another serious problem fire departments deal with. Firefighters often discover disabled smoke detectors, either the battery has died or people have removed the battery because false alarms became annoying.

The new smoke detectors we have, which are provided to low-income homeowners and senior citizens, come with a battery that should last at least 10 years," said Schneider. "That greatly increases the life of the smoke alarm and reduces the chances of people removing or disabling them because of the annoying chirping sound they make when the battery power gets low."



***Yakama Legends Casino Operations Manager Carlos Villareal presents Yakima Fire Department Captain Tom Schneider a with a \$3,500 check. The money will buy smoke detectors to be given away.***

The Yakima Fire Department will even come to your home and install a new smoke detector without charge.

A sign up form for a free smoke detector is available online at [www.yakimafire.com](http://www.yakimafire.com) or by calling the Yakima Fire Department at 575-6060. The form asks if the applicant is a renter or a homeowner because landlords are legally responsible to supply working smoke detectors. Renters should contact their landlord first to request smoke detectors be installed if they aren't already. Other questions on the sign up form ask if people are disabled, low income, a senior citizen, and the number of people in the residence and age of the dwelling.

The Yakima Fire Department has been offering free smoke detectors for years, but with the additional funding and longer lasting batteries, the department will be able to make more Yakima homes safe.

Yakama Nation Legends Casino awarded more than \$850,000 this year to 185 community organizations and local governments from gambling revenue under terms of a tribal gaming compact with the State of Washington.



**Help  
Wanted**

### Be Part of the Solution!

**Help reduce panhandling. Instead of giving money directly to panhandlers, donate to local agencies and organizations that provide services to people who are low-income or homeless.**

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