

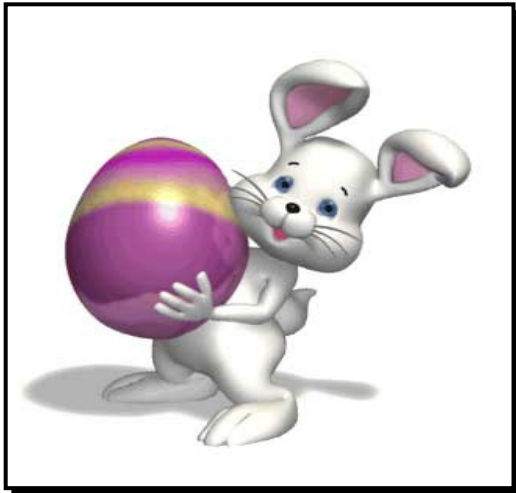
March 2014

Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

✦ The Easter Bunny to Share Breakfast at the Harman Center

With Easter fast approaching, preparations are underway for Yakima to welcome a very special visitor. The Easter Bunny will skip into town and make a hop stop at Yakima's Harman Senior Center on Saturday, April 12th for a special "Breakfast with the Easter Bunny" event.



As part of his holiday schedule, the Easter Bunny will stop by the Harman Center on April 12th for breakfast.

While hippity hopping down the bunny trail, the famous rabbit will spend a couple of hours at the Harman Center frolicking about, greeting people, and of course... hiding eggs. The Easter Bunny is scheduled to be at the Senior Center, which is located at 101 North 65th Avenue, from 8:00 am to 10:00 am that day.

During his visit, everyone will also have the chance to get their picture taken with the Easter Bunny. Anyone interested in snapping a photo with the lovable rabbit should bring their own camera or other picture taking device.

At 9:30 am sharp, be sure to have your Easter basket handy as the expert egg hider will be helping kids 10 and under search for hidden treasures around the outside of the center. Be sure to bring a coat unless you have bunny fur to keep you warm.

It will cost only \$5.00 for the delicious breakfast on April 12th, which is being sponsored by Yakima Valley Senior Citizens, Inc., a non-profit group that supports activities and programs at the Harman Senior Center.

"We're very excited to have such a prestigious guest coming to breakfast," said Parks and Recreation Supervisor Traci Bennett. "First Santa made a stop at Christmas and now the Easter Bunny... who could have imagined it?"

People who plan on attending the special "Breakfast with the Easter Bunny" event at the Harman Center on Saturday, April 12th are being asked to make reservations no later than April 4th by calling 575-6166.



The Easter Bunny's Harman Center visit on April 12th will include an Easter Egg hunt at 9:30 am.

Pilot Curbside Recycling Project to Launch in Early April

Results of the 2013 Yakima Citizen Survey made it clear that people in Yakima are interested in curbside recycling, but are wary of how much it might cost. In response to that feedback, the City will launch a four-month pilot curbside recycling program in early May involving about 600 homes to test whether expanding the concept citywide would be cost effective and efficient.

The 2013 survey showed that 80% of people who responded would “strongly support” or “somewhat strongly support” a City-operated curbside recycling program if it were free. If the cost were \$2.50 a month, 69% were supportive. That number dropped to 37% if curbside recycling cost \$5.00 a month, and to just 24% if the cost were \$7.50 monthly.

“We know that people in Yakima want to recycle, but they are only interested in a curbside program if it can be provided at a reasonable cost,” said Yakima Refuse and Recycling Manager Loretta Zammarchi. “The best way for us to figure out if that’s possible is to actually run a curbside recycling service on a small scale and for a short period of time.”

The pilot project will run from May 6th through August 29th. The project will be conducted in neighborhoods east and north of Kissel Park (3000 West Mead Avenue). Homes in the pilot project area will receive free curbside recycling during the test period.



A 32-gallon garbage cart (left), a 96-gallon yard waste cart (center), and a 96-gallon recycling cart (right) will be provided to 600 pilot project homes.

Each of the approximately 600 homes taking part in the pilot project will receive a 32-gallon garbage cart, a 96-gallon yard waste cart, and a 96-gallon recycling cart. Homeowners will be asked to put grass clippings, tree branches, garden rubbish, etc., in the yard waste cart. Plastic drink containers, cardboard, paper, metal cans, etc., will go in the recycling cart. Non recyclables, like glass containers, food residue, toy packaging, etc., are to be placed in the garbage cart.

The garbage, yard waste, and recycling carts will be delivered to the pilot project homes beginning April 21st. To help homeowners learn more about the project, the Yakima Solid Waste & Recycling Division will sponsor a **Community Cleanup and Recycling Information Day** event at Kissel Park on Saturday, April 26th from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

In addition to testing the curbside recycling concept, the pilot project will also help the City learn if a citywide program would help reduce the amount of garbage that is now taken to Yakima County’s Terrace Heights Landfill.

“The County predicts its Terrace Heights Landfill will be full in about 11 years,” said Zammarchi. “When that facility closes, the City will have to haul garbage much further and at a greater cost to the Cheyne Landfill in the Lower Valley. We need to figure out now how we can decrease the amount of garbage that goes to the landfill so we can be as responsible as possible not only because of the costs involved but also from an environmental standpoint,” said Zammarchi. “Recycling may be one way to get there.”

Once the pilot project has ended, homeowners who participated in it will be surveyed to find out how curbside recycling worked for them. Survey responses and other data gathered during the pilot project will then be included in a report that will be presented to the City Council in the fall of this year. From that point, the City Council will be asked to make a decision about whether to move forward with a citywide curbside recycling project or not.

Weather Helps Work Progress on MLK, Jr. Blvd Underpass

A relatively mild winter has enabled crews working on the multi-million dollar MLK, Jr. Boulevard underpass project in Yakima to remain on schedule. With the feel of spring in the air, activity is on the upswing as workers move toward completion of the project later this year.

Work began in early 2013 on the roughly \$10.6 million project that will eventually take MLK, Jr. Blvd traffic below the BNSF tracks near North Front Street. Construction activity now is focusing in several areas on both sides of the railroad tracks.

On the east side of the tracks, girders are now in place that will allow for construction to begin on the North Front Street Bridge that will cross over the underpass. The bridge should be finished in 4 to 6 weeks, but will remain closed to traffic until the entire underpass project is completed.



Work is underway on the North Front Street bridge, which will carry car traffic above the MLK, Jr. Blvd underpass.

On the west side of the underpass project, excavation work is continuing and temporary struts are in place to provide additional support for the retaining walls during the installation of the shallow portion of the bottom seal. That work involves pouring concrete to a depth ranging from about 6 feet to about 8 feet. The purpose of the bottom seal is to create a base for the roadway and to minimize groundwater infiltration.

So far, nearly 12,500 cubic yards of dirt and rock has been excavated. Another 13,000 cubic yards of material is expected to be removed before the underpass project is completed. Work is also underway on the relocation of a water main north of MLK, Jr. Blvd and to install retaining wall barriers.

Mowat Construction Company, the Woodinville-based firm serving as the project's primary contractor, is expected to continue work on the underpass until late summer or early fall of 2014.

You can watch progress on the underpass project by visiting a page on the City of Yakima website- <http://bit.ly/12q70a8> . Two cameras are focused on the construction site and pictures are updated every 30 seconds.

Both the MLK, Jr. Blvd underpass and the Lincoln Avenue underpass, which opened in May 2012, have been designed to improve driver and pedestrian safety, reduce exhaust emissions from cars waiting for trains to pass, and speed the response times for police, fire, and other emergency service providers.



**Help
Wanted**

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).

Yakima is our community – Be Part of the Solution!