



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: National Night Out

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National Night Out Set for August 1st

Throughout the Yakima Valley and across the nation, communities will be throwing a "going away party for crime" during the annual National Night Out on Tuesday, August 1st. In addition to numerous neighborhood block parties, several organizations and businesses will be sponsoring National Night Out events.

The August 1st Yakima City Council business meeting will begin at 2:00 pm rather than at the normal 6:00 pm start time so Council members can attend National Night Out events that evening.

National Night Out was started in 1984 and is the brainchild of Matt Peskin, who was the executive director of the National Association of Town Watch ("NATW") at the time. The NATW is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and growth of crime and drug prevention programs nationwide. NATW's membership now includes now more than 6,500 crime, drug, and violence prevention organizations.

In the early 1980s, the NATW estimated that in a typical community, only 5% to 7% of residents were actively engaged in crime prevention. Peskin was convinced that more people would become involved in fighting crime if given the opportunity. He believed that in order to heighten awareness and strengthen participation in local anti-crime efforts, a high-profile, high-impact type of event was needed on a national scale. Peskin's idea grew to become National Night Out.

In its first year, about 400 communities participated in National Night Out activities. The 34th annual version of the event this year is expected to include more than 16,000 cities and towns and an estimated 38 million people.

While the traditional 'lights on' and front porch vigils remain a part of National Night Out, the variety of events that take place in communities has expanded considerably over the years to include block parties, cookouts, parades, visits from police, festivals, neighborhood walks, safety fairs, contests, rallies and meetings.

"National Night Out is a wonderful opportunity for communities nationwide to promote police-community partnerships, crime prevention, and neighborhood camaraderie," said Peskin. "While the one night is certainly not an answer to crime, drugs, and violence, National Night Out does represent the kind of spirit, energy and determination that is helping to make many neighborhoods safer places throughout the year. It's a night to celebrate safety and crime prevention successes and to expand and strengthen programs for the next 364 days," said Peskin.

For more information about National Night Out, visit the official National Night Out website at <https://natw.org/>.