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City of Yakima e-Newsletter

ISSUES BRIEF



photo courtesy Naches Fire Department



Yakima Fire Dept. photo.

Fruit Packers Supply, 1102 N. 16th Ave., was the site of two suspicious fires in August that occurred about 48 hours apart. Damages were estimated at \$21 million or more.

Nearly 30 suspicious fires were reported during a six-week span

Yakima Police seek community's help to prevent suspicious fires

Yakima police are asking for the community's help in preventing suspicious fires by providing information about people who loiter around businesses and other commercial buildings after hours.

This past summer, nearly 30 suspicious fires occurred in Yakima over the span of about six weeks, a number fire and police officials say was unusually high. The majority of those fires, as is the case with most suspicious fires, occurred at night or early in the morning when it was still dark.

"It's unusual for one person to be hanging around a business or commercial building when it's not open," said Yakima Police Lieutenant Mike Pollard. "A lone individual standing around or sitting by a building that is not open for business is one possible indication that they may be involved in something they shouldn't be involved in."

Fire investigators and police detectives say accelerants or other fuels, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, turpentine, or other flammable solvents, are often used in suspicious fires to ensure flames grow quickly and travel farther than they normally would.

So, a person milling around a building during non-business hours with a backpack or something else used to carry things may be considered suspicious.

The presence of other flammable materials, like cardboard or stacks of paper, near a person hanging around a building that's not open for business also raises suspicion as does the person acting nervous by pacing back and forth, turning their back to other people who might see them, or having a vehicle waiting nearby.

"If people see any of those suspicious signs or behaviors, they are encouraged to report them," said Pollard. "The more eyes and ears that are out there helping keep our community safe the better. People are encouraged to share whatever information they may have, no matter how significant or insignificant they may think it is," said Pollard.

If community members see suspicious activity, they can call 9-1-1 at the time the activity is occurring. Reports can also be provided to YPD detectives by calling 575-6200 or through Yakima County Crime Stoppers by calling 249-9980 or submitting a tip online at crimestoppersyakco.org.

City Councilmember Jason White focusing on Yakima's 2019 Budget

Yakima City Council member Jason White has spent the last couple of months focusing on the city's budget.

"The most important thing the City Council does each year is its budget," he said. "It is the way the Council tells the staff, these are the things we think are the most important. These are the things we want to get done next year."

This year's financial plan was especially challenging, he said, because Yakima is facing tough financial times. "We overspent the last several years," he said. "Previous city councils just kept spending and spending on every good idea that came along and took whatever money was needed out of the city's reserve account. But you can't do that forever and, sooner or later, someone has to pay the piper. This Council has accepted that responsibility."

The first step, he said, was to stop spending and look for cuts.

"The last thing we wanted to do was raise taxes," said White. "So we looked at ways we could save money. We went through every department and trimmed expenses where we could and cut programs that were not a top priority."

Several positions were cut, including some that had been left empty as employees left or retired. Other expenses like travel and training costs were cut as well as some program costs and contributions to outside groups and agencies. No general taxes were raised but some utility rates were increased, said the first-term councilman.

"We basically tried to keep pace with inflation, nothing more," said White, who represents the southeast part of Yakima. "After we cut as much as we could we prioritized various city programs, preserving the ones we thought were most important and trimming back the rest."

Although the final 2019 budget has yet to be approved, White believes the City Council not only made needed cuts, but it preserved the city's core functions and was able to increase funding in a couple of important areas.

"At this point it looks like we will be able to invest more in the Henry Beauchamp Community Center as well as the YPAL program's building in Miller Park," he said. "And we are going to add money for traffic safety programs that are badly needed in my district."

Next year's budget, said Councilman White, is balanced and fair. "This Council has shown it can be fiscally responsible," he said.



- Yakima City Councilmember Jason White represents District No. 2

Car tab dollars fund Naches Avenue sidewalk project



The first City of Yakima project to use Transportation Benefit District car tab fee money is now underway.

Crews began work this month to replace trees and sidewalks along a section of Naches Avenue from Walnut Street to Pacific Avenue. It involves removing and replacing trees and sidewalks in the public right-of-way. The project will continue through spring 2019.

The speed limit through all traffic-related work zones within the City of Yakima is 20 miles-per-hour.

The Yakima City Council late last year approved forming a Transportation Benefit District, also known as TBD, which includes an annual license plate tab fee on all vehicles registered in the City.

Briefly...

Route 8 changes announced

Schedule changes went into effect last month for Yakima Transit's Route 8.

The changes are intended to better serve Yakima Transit passengers.

The route changes can be found on-line at <https://yakimatransit.org/new-changes-to-route-8/>

Shuttle available for Luminaria event

Yakima Transit will provide free shuttle bus service to the Yakima Area Arboretum's 2018 Luminaria Candle-Lit Walk event on Friday, December 7th and Saturday, December 8th.

Shuttle buses will run continuously from the parking lot of the former K-Mart store, located south of Highway 24.

Yakima Transit shuttles will run from 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm on both December 7th and 8th. The Luminaria Walk event on those days will run from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Toy drive continues through Dec. 14th

Yakima's Harman Center is helping area residents give back this holiday season with a "Toys for Tots" toy drive.

New, unwrapped toys can be brought to the the Harman Center front desk through Dec. 14.



The Bike & Pedestrian Committee is among the volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers needed for City of Yakima boards, commissions and committees

The Yakima City Council is seeking volunteers interested in serving on City of Yakima boards, committees, and commissions.

The Arts Commission and Community Review Board each have one position open. The Historic Preservation Commission and the Board of Appeals currently have two openings. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee will have one vacancy and two term expirations.

It is the responsibility of the City Council to appoint people to serve on the governing bodies of those organizations.

There are no residency requirements for the openings on the Arts Commission, whose members serve four-year terms. The available position on the commission needs to be filled by an artist.

There are seven members of the Historic Preservation Commission. All serve four-year terms and must live within Yakima city limits. Members must include at least three professionals who have experience in identifying, evaluating, and protecting historic resources.

There are seven members on the Board of Appeals who serve three-year terms. The board requires a mechanical contractor or a developer to fill one of its vacancies.

There is no residency requirement for Community Review Board members. Currently there is a vacancy for a representative of the healthcare community.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Board has seven members. Members serve a three-year term and must live within the Yakima city limits.

Additional information on the duties and responsibilities of each committee can be found at <https://www.yakimawa.gov/council/boards-commissions/>.

Those interested in applying can download an application on-line at <https://www.yakimawa.gov/council/assets/Application-form-for-City-of-Yakima-Boards-and-Commissions.pdf> or pick one up at the City Clerk's office at Yakima City Hall. For more information, contact City Clerk Sonya Claar Tee at 575-6037 or sonya.claartee@yakimawa.gov.

Got leaves? The City of Yakima has options for removing them



Yakima City Code forbids sweeping leaves and yard debris onto streets, gutters and sidewalks due to issues with leaves clogging storm drains.

The City of Yakima is offering leaf disposal options for residents through the City's Refuse Division, which offers yard waste collection through November 30th.

For \$16.30 per month, the City will provide residents with a 96-gallon cart dedicated for leaves and yard debris. Leaves must be placed loose in the cart and not bagged. The cart will be picked up during the regularly scheduled yard waste pick-up time.

Another option is to call the City's Solid Waste Division and let them know they have extra bags. The Division will accept up to three extra bags placed beside the garbage cart, however, the customer must call in advance for pick-up. There is an extra fee of \$2.77 per bag.

Call 575-6005 for more on City leaf removal services.

Photo of the Month



Sean Davido photo

The sunset paints a magical mural on the west side of the newly erected gravesite memorial for Staff Sergeant Jack J. Pendleton Yakima's only Medal of Honor recipient. Find more photos of honoring S Sgt Pendleton and other Veterans at the Tahoma Cemetery in the "Snapshots" section of the City of Yakima website at this link. <https://www.yakimawa.gov/media/snapshots/tahoma-cemetery-veteran-tribute/>



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City Contacts

Airport:	575-6149
Animal Control:	575-6038
City Clerk:	575-6000
City Manager:	575-6000
Codes/Licenses:	575-6126
* Fire:	575-6060
Human Resources:	575-6090
Municipal Court:	575-3050
Parks:	575-6020
Planning:	575-6183
* Police:	575-6200
Refuse:	575-6005
Streets:	575-6005
Transit:	575-6175
Utilities:	575-6080
Wastewater:	575-6077
Water/Irrig:	575-6154
YCTV/YPAC:	575-6092

The City of Yakima *Issues Brief e-Newsletter* is published monthly by the City's Community Relations Office.

Questions? Suggestions?

Contact Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler at 575-6045 or Randy.Beehler@yakimawa.gov.

*** NON-EMERGENCY only.
Call 911 in an emergency.**