



# Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

## ✦ Breast Cancer Fundraiser Is a Big Success

For the past eight years, the dispatchers and calltakers at SunComm, Yakima's 9-1-1 emergency services agency, have put on a fundraiser during October as part of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The 2015 version of the event was held on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> and was once again a big success.

We are so thankful for the support we've gotten from the community year after year, said SunComm Assistant Manager Stacey Garcia who has organized the event along with co-worker Katy Ybarra. We set a goal every year and make every effort to meet it. We're still working on a final 2015 tally because a few donations are still coming in, said Garcia. We're definitely going to meet or beat our goal of raising \$4,000 this year. We're very proud of that.



SunComm's fundraiser is part of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The proceeds of this year's fundraiser will go to support the operations of Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital's Ohana Mammography Center, just as they have since the first year of the fundraiser.

This year's total includes money raised during the event by selling a hot dog lunch, nachos, and baked goods donated by SunComm employees, their friends, and family members. Pink hair extensions were also sold during the fundraiser for \$10.00 a piece and 50/50 raffle was held.

Ybarra is continuing to sell pink hair extensions for the next week or so. Anyone interested in getting a pink hair extension to support the SunComm fundraiser can contact Ybarra at 901-2149 or Garcia at 901-9891.

Yakima manufacturing firm Orchard-Rite, LTD, Inc. also stepped forward with a \$1000 donation as it has for several years.

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 by e-mail ([sonya.claartee@yakimawa.gov](mailto:sonya.claartee@yakimawa.gov)).

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

## **Fourth Annual Citizen Survey Results Released**

Results from the 2015 Yakima Citizen Survey show community members are continuing to feel like progress is being made by the City in tackling some of Yakima's most pressing issues but that others may need more attention.

In 2012 the Yakima City Council launched the first Yakima Citizen Survey to find out what community members thought about City services and to help identify areas that needed improvement. Survey results have led to the redesign of City programs and services to address issues ranging from street repair and employment opportunities to crime prevention and Yakima's overall image.

Phase 1 of this year's survey, which involved questionnaires being mailed out to about 3000 randomly-selected households, began in mid-July and ended in mid-August. Phase 2 of the survey, which involved making the questionnaire available for anyone to fill out online, began in late August and ended in late September. The mail-in and online survey forms were identical.



***Increased Yakima Police Department bike patrols downtown were implemented to enhance the overall feeling of safety in the area.***

The rating for the overall feeling of safety in Yakima has risen each of the last three years in both the mail-in and online survey results. Mail-in survey takers gave a 31% excellent/good+ rating to the overall feeling of safety this year compared to a 29% excellent/good+ rating in 2014. People who filled out the online survey this year gave a 36% excellent/good+ rating to the overall feeling of safety compared to a 33% rating last year.

Customer service received a 53% excellent/good+ rating this year from mail-in survey takers, a 10 percentage point improvement from 2014. Online results showed a dip in the customer service rating from 58% excellent/good+ in 2014 to 53% this year.

Last year both online and mail-in survey takers gave a 38% excellent/good+ rating to the overall direction that Yakima is taking. This year both groups of respondents rated the overall direction that Yakima is taking at 30% excellent/good+. The value of services for taxes paid rating came in slightly lower this year than in 2015. Mail-in results showed a 27% excellent/good+ rating this year compared to 32% last year and online results for the same rating went from 37% last year to 35% this year.

Each of the last three surveys have included questions about which areas the City should be focusing on making investments in. Public safety continues to top the list with a 93% essential/very important+ rating in this year's mail-in results and a 91% online rating. Economic development is next (89% mail-in, 88% online) followed by infrastructure/roads (77% mail-in, 74% online), codes and sign regulations (58% mail-in, 59% online), and community events (56% mail-in, 61% online).

This year's mail-in survey was returned by 735 people compared to 743 in 2014. Last year 609 people filled out the online survey compared to 449 this year.

Various reports explaining the results of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this year's survey can be found on the City's website at <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/city-manager/citizen-survey-results/>.

## ✦ City's Fire Hydrants Are Ship Shape

Fire hydrants stand silent guard in neighborhoods throughout the City of Yakima. Few are ever called into action. But each has to be ready to respond at a moment's notice. Ensuring that the City's fire hydrants are in good working order ensures that lives can be saved.

That's why City Water/Irrigation crews have recently been testing a quarter of the more than 3,000 hydrants in the city, just like they do every year.

"Like a lot of the utility system, people tend to take fire hydrants for granted," said City of Yakima Water/Irrigation Manager Dave Brown. "But like anything else, hydrants need to receive regular maintenance so they are ready to go when they're needed. Making sure that all of the City's fire hydrants are working properly isn't exactly the most glamorous job, but it's right up there with the most important ones," said Brown.

Annual testing of hydrants is a requirement of the Washington Survey and Ratings Bureau and plays a role in how insurance rates are established for homes and businesses in the Yakima area and across the state. The Bureau is a non-profit entity that provides services to all companies that sell property insurance in Washington state. The mission of the Bureau is to provide accurate, relevant, and timely information about risk.

In addition to testing to make sure that water will flow correctly if fire hoses are hooked to them, crews also check to see if hydrants need to have a fresh coat of paint applied to them.

"Typically, we find quite a few hydrants each year that need their paint jobs touched up," said Brown. "In a normal year, we probably identify about three-quarters of the hydrants that we test that need to be repainted. That means that we put a new coat of paint on at least 500 hydrants each year," Brown said.

Some hydrants require touchups because they have been hit by graffiti while others have simply faded over time. This year City crews were assisted by The Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints volunteers.



***About 750 of the more than 3000 fire hydrants in Yakima are tested each year to ensure they are working properly.***



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