



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Plath Family Donation to Downtown Plaza Project

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Prominent Yakima Fruit Industry Family Donates \$2 million to Plaza Project

Fred Plath had a choice to make in the early 1900s when he was considering where to establish his new business. Ultimately, Plath chose Yakima over Phoenix, Arizona and founded Washington Fruit and Produce Company in 1916.

That decision led to the success of Plath's company and certainly contributed to Yakima becoming an agricultural powerhouse. Since it began, his company has grown into a major player in the industry and now boasts more than 1,000 full-time employees and up to 1,500 workers during peak harvest. Washington Fruit grows, markets, and ships a combined 12 million boxes of packed fruit on average each year.

The company is still family-owned today, and Fred Plath's descendants are continuing to honor his decision to be part of helping Yakima succeed by actively funding programs and projects that improve the area's quality of life. The family's latest significant community investment comes in the form of a \$2 million donation to the Downtown Yakima Central Plaza Project.

The decision to partner with the City of Yakima to help build the project was made after Plath family members attended a public meeting about the project that was led by the plaza's designer, Kathryn Gustafson, a Yakima native who has become a world-renowned landscape architect.

"We thought this would be a great project for our family to be involved with since we learned about it at one of Kathryn Gustafson's presentations," said Cliff Plath. "Kathryn and her team are first-class designers and we feel a project of this quality represents a great investment in our community's future, the revival of Downtown Yakima, and the economic vitality of the region. We're excited to be part of it," said Plath.

The Yakima City Council will consider a resolution authorizing a funding agreement between the Plath family and the City during its April 7th business meeting. Under the agreement, the Plath family would provide equal installments of \$500,000 over four years to be used toward the design, engineering, and construction costs of the Downtown Yakima Central Plaza. The family would retain naming rights to the plaza's Market Hall Building as part of the agreement.

"The contribution by the Plath family to the plaza project epitomizes the generosity that local businesses consistently demonstrate toward the Yakima community," said Yakima City Manager Tony O'Rourke. "The City has said from the start that the plaza project needs buy in from the private sector in order to succeed. The significant commitment that the Plath family is making to the project puts us much closer to achieving that goal," said O'Rourke.

The Plath family requests that media inquiries regarding its contribution to the plaza project be directed to the City of Yakima.