



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Public Works Director and Wastewater Manager

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Acting Tag Removed from Public Works Director and Wastewater Manager

When longtime City of Yakima Public Works Director Chris Waarvick retired in June, Scott Schafer, who was the City's Wastewater Manager at the time, was named Acting Public Works Director in order to allow City Manager Tony O'Rourke some time to evaluate how the position would be filled on a more permanent basis.

At the same time, Utilities and Engineering Director Debbie Cook appointed Shelley Willson, then a Utility Engineer, to step into Schafer's shoes temporarily and become the Acting Wastewater Manager.

After having seen both Schafer and Willson perform well in their acting capacities for the past six months, O'Rourke and Cook have decided to remove the "acting" tag from their titles. This week, O'Rourke formally promoted Schafer to the job of Public Works Director and Cook named Willson to the role of Wastewater Manager.

Schafer has worked for the City since July 1996 when he was hired as a Lab Technician in the Wastewater Division. He was promoted to the position of Environmental Analyst in the Wastewater Division in September 2003 and then to the position of Assistant Wastewater Division Manager in July 2005. In September 2008, Schafer was named to serve as the Acting Wastewater Division Manager and became the City's Wastewater Division Manager in February 2009.

Willson was first hired by the City as a Traffic Technician in April 1983. She was promoted to the position of Supervising Traffic Engineer about seven years later. After serving in an acting capacity for six months, Willson became the City's Streets and Traffic Division Manager in January 1999. Since December 2007, she has worked primarily on stormwater issues as a Utility Engineer in the Wastewater Division.

"I've had the privilege of working with both Scott and Shelley and they are truly assets to the City," said Cook. "I'm happy that Scott has been given the opportunity to lead the Public Works Department. He has done a great job during his tenure at Wastewater," said Cook. "I'm equally excited that we are able to have someone as qualified as Shelley take the reins of the Wastewater Division. It's the best of both worlds."

"The City is committed to cultivating leaders from within the organization itself," said O'Rourke. "Being able to promote Scott and Shelley to their new roles is an excellent example of how that approach can work successfully. Both Scott and Shelley have extensive experience in their specific disciplines and both have contributed a lot to the City of Yakima over the years," said O'Rourke. "I'm pleased that the City will continue to benefit by having them as key members of the management team."

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