



September 2012

City of Yakima

# Issues Brief

## A Big Yakima Thanks to LDS Community Clean Up Volunteers

Volunteers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ("LDS") wards in the Yakima area joined forces with staff from State Fair Park, the City of Yakima Refuse Division, and the City's Parks and Recreation Division to spruce up very visible areas of the community on Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Yakima City Council and City of Yakima employees give a **Big Yakima Thanks** to the LDS volunteers who helped out!



**LDS volunteers help clean up a traffic triangle in Downtown Yakima.**

During the community clean up, one crew of LDS volunteers worked at Kiwanis Park helping clean up a pond and the Apple Valley Kiwanis Skate Park. Another crew focused on the Yakima Visitors Information Center and the traffic triangle a few blocks away at the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and MLK, Jr. Boulevard. A third LDS crew was at State Fair Park assisting staff there to prepare the grounds for the upcoming Central Washington State Fair.

The City of Yakima is developing a plan to utilize volunteers for several community clean up efforts in 2013 and then, hopefully, continue to grow the program in the years to come. The recently-completed 2012 Yakima Citizen Survey showed that a lot of people who filled out the questionnaire feel that the overall appearance of the community needs to be improved. The survey also indicated that people in Yakima are more than willing to volunteer and to help neighbors.

The City intends to leverage the high level of interest in volunteerism demonstrated by the survey results to address the concerns raised in the survey about the community's appearance.

The number and frequency of volunteer community clean up opportunities that the City will provide next year are still being determined and will be part of a comprehensive Strategic Plan that is being developed based on priorities established by the City Council at its retreat in late August. The Strategic Plan will be presented to the City Council during an upcoming study session.

*For more information about this article, contact Community Relations Manager Randy Beehler by phone (901-1142) or by e-mail (randy.beehler@yakimawa.gov).*

## **Key Online Survey Results Echo Earlier Mail-In Results**

Key results from the online phase of the 2012 Yakima Citizen Survey are largely similar to the results from the mail-in phase of the survey that were released last month.

Nearly 600 people filled out the online version of the questionnaire, which was designed to gauge public opinion about quality of life issues in Yakima as well as City services and priorities. That compares to about 840 people who completed the survey during its scientifically-valid mail-in phase.

Just like those who participated in the mail-in phase of the survey, people who took the online version of the questionnaire gave high marks to fire services with an identical 84% "good" to "excellent" rating. Support for curbside recycling was also high for both the mail-in results (88%) and the online results (84%). People who took part in the mail-in phase rated the quality of street repairs low (21% "excellent" or "good") while online respondents gave road maintenance even poorer marks (11% "excellent" or "good").



**Based on citizen survey results, the quality of Yakima's roads needs to be improved.**

A summary comparison of the key results of both the mail-in survey and the online survey can be found in the Notable section on the City's website front page.

The results from both phases of the survey will play a central role in the development of a strategic plan for the City, a process that got underway in earnest during the City Council's August 28<sup>th</sup> retreat.

Survey results are already affecting how the City does business. Based on survey feedback which indicated some Yakima residents don't feel as safe as they would like to in the downtown area, the Yakima Police Department revived its bike patrol on a pilot project basis earlier this month. The City also learned from the survey that many people think the appearance of Yakima needs to be improved and indicated they would be willing to volunteer to help clean up the community. Given those results, the City is working on developing several community clean up events next year in order to provide interested residents with opportunities to volunteer.

The mail-in phase of the 2012 Yakima Citizen Survey was completed in late July and the online phase wrapped up in late August. National Research Center, Inc. ("NRC") conducted the survey for the City. NRC has performed similar surveys for about 400 other communities nationwide. The City Council plans on conducting a citizen survey on an annual basis.

*For more information about this article, contact Community Relations Manager Randy Beehler by phone (901-1142) or by e-mail ([randy.beehler@yakimawa.gov](mailto:randy.beehler@yakimawa.gov)).*

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The articles in the Business Spotlight section have been generously provided by New Vision.

## **Haas Growing Its World-Class Yakima Facility**

John I. Haas, Inc., the largest supplier of hop products in the U.S., broke ground last month on a multi-million dollar research complex at its Yakima campus that will further enhance the company's reputation as a world leader in developing innovative technologies for the hop industry. The new 23,500 square-foot building, which is being built near the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and River Road, will include a new technology center, a research brewery, and offices. Haas expects construction to be completed by the summer of 2013.

Of the 50 total employees that will be housed in the new facility, about 10 will be new. The rest will be relocated from other Haas locations that are spread around Yakima.



**The Yakima Valley produces nearly 80% of all hops grown the U.S.**

The new complex is impressive not only because of the enhanced research capabilities it will provide the company, it has also been designed to meet strict criteria needed to make it eligible for certification as a LEED Gold building.

LEED, an acronym for *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design*, rewards "green" strategies like the use of natural light, low-water landscaping, and utilization of recyclable materials – all of which have been incorporated into the design of the new Haas facility.

## **Another Innovative Company Built by Yakima Entrepreneur**

In the mid 1980s, Kerry Martin established himself as a leader in the local business community when he opened 5K Computers. In the late 1990s, Martin created CodeCorrect, which became the preeminent medical coding application in the country.

Today, the Yakima entrepreneur is leading VitalWare, a software company focused on helping medical providers transition to a new set of billing codes known as "ICD-10".

Founded about two years ago, VitalWare already has about 25 employees and plans to be in a hiring mode for the next 6-12 months. VitalWare is truly a Yakima business success story.



*For more information about Business Spotlight articles, contact New Vision by phone (575-1140) or by e-mail (info@ycda.com).*