



City of Yakima

# News Release

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**Subject: Traffic Signal Cabinet Art Project**

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## Arts Commission Project Aimed at Sprucing Up Traffic Signal Cabinets

When most people look at traffic signal cabinets, if they notice them at all, what they see is a necessary, if not particularly attractive, part of the traffic control system. Inside the non-descript metal boxes are the electronic components that allow cars and pedestrians to safely navigate intersections.

When members of the Yakima Arts Commission took a close look at the cabinets, what they saw was a canvas on which to showcase public art.

The Arts Commission is developing a new project in partnership with the City of Yakima Public Works Department to wrap selected traffic signal cabinets with designs created by Yakima-area artists. The first cabinet to feature the work of a local artist, which is located on the northeast corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Yakima Avenue, will be officially unveiled during a ceremony on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am.

A design created by Yakima artist Stan Hughes featuring abstract images of turtles was chosen by the Arts Commission as part of a pilot project to test the process of printing designs on a vinyl wrap and applying them to a signal cabinet. The location for the first signal cabinet public art installation was chosen because of its high visibility and because the 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Yakima Avenue cabinet was being replaced anyway.

We wanted to use a new, unblemished cabinet for the first installation so we could make sure the vinyl application had the best chance of being successful, said City of Yakima Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins. The process worked just as we hoped it would. The result is something that is usually ordinary, a traffic signal cabinet, has been transformed into something extraordinary.

The Arts Commission is currently developing the details of the traffic signal cabinet public art project, including how many cabinets will be wrapped, where those cabinets will be, how artists may be compensated, etc. The commission expects to have the project fully developed by late spring of this year.

Many other cities (Seattle, Tampa, Florida, and Fort Worth, Texas, to name a few) have painted, wrapped, or otherwise decorated utility cabinets for several years as a way to make the boxes less utilitarian looking and to add character to neighborhoods.

Public art is so important to creating a vibrant and dynamic atmosphere in a community, said Yakima Arts Commission Chair Noel Moxely. We've already experienced that with the success of the Windows Alive! project, which has helped to transform empty storefronts in Downtown Yakima into streetside art galleries. We're looking forward to the signal cabinet project having the same positive effect, said Moxely.