



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: YPD Take Home Vehicle Program

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Yakima Police Take Home Vehicle Program Paying Dividends

The Yakima community is beginning to reap benefits from a new program that allows Yakima police officers to take their patrol vehicles home. During the past few weeks, off-duty officers have been in the right place at the right time when dispatch calls went out over the radio.

"The simple fact is that we now have more eyes and ears out there," said Yakima Police Captain Rod Light. "That increased police presence is making Yakima streets safer. An off-duty officer can now radio in any problems they might see or take immediate action if the situation warrants," said Light.

That is exactly what City officials were hoping for when the idea was proposed during contract negotiations last year and that's exactly what has happened over the last few weeks. Off-duty officers in their take-home vehicles have helped track down armed robbery suspects, assisted in locating a kidnap victim and arresting her captor, and witnessing a drunk, reckless driver and getting him off the road.

As a result of the contract talks last year, the Yakima Police Patrolman's Association, which represents front line officers, agreed to forgo pay increases for the next two years in exchange for being able to take home their patrol vehicles and use them during off-duty hours. Financing the purchase of 74 additional vehicles will cost the City about \$800,000 annually over the next six years.

"It's far less expensive to increase our police presence through an assigned patrol vehicles program than it is to hire an additional 20 police officers at a cost of \$2 million a year," said City Manager Tony O'Rourke. "Our last two citizen surveys indicated community members wanted the City to improve the sense of safety in Yakima. The successes we've had with the assigned patrol vehicle program so far are helping us to achieve that goal," said O'Rourke.

The assigned patrol vehicle program was phased in during the past four months and the last new car was put into service this week.

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