



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Yakima Irrigation Season Begins

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Yakima Irrigation Season Starts April 2nd

Monday, April 2nd will mark the start of the 2018 irrigation season for the vast majority of the residential and business customers served by the City of Yakima's irrigation system. That's the day that the majority of the collection of systems operated by the City's Water/Irrigation Division are scheduled to begin delivering water.

All City of Yakima irrigation systems should be fully operational by mid-April. The few other irrigation systems that operate independently from the City system will also be gearing up during April and should be fully operational by the beginning of May.

It's a good idea for people to spend some time now preparing for the start of the irrigation season, said Irrigation Supervisor Rich Sanislo. If they need to make repairs to the pipes that are on their property, now is the right time to do that. Customers should also be sure that all of their faucets are turned off before the water starts flowing on April 2nd so that they avoid any unnecessary flooding when the systems are turned on, said Sanislo.

The irrigation season in Yakima typically runs from early April to mid-October each year.

By developing innovative irrigation water delivery systems in Yakima in the late 1800s, the region's pioneers took advantage of the rich soil in the Yakima Valley, deposited by multiple ancient volcanic eruptions, and established one of the most productive and diverse agricultural regions in the country.

The earliest known experiment with irrigation in the Yakima Valley is believed to have taken place in 1864 when water was diverted from Ahtanum Creek to help grow a few acres of crops for the Catholic mission nearby. After achieving some success, private canal companies began to form to bring water to more and more land. By the late 1800s, irrigation had proven its worth in unlocking the agricultural bounty of the Yakima Valley.

After a few years of lobbying the federal government, leaders from the Yakima Valley convinced Congress to study, and ultimately begin to build in 1905, a network of canals and other delivery system to turn the region into what its earliest settlers had envisioned . an agricultural powerhouse.

Over the many decades that followed, irrigation systems in the Yakima area were expanded and refined. Today, the irrigated lands within what came to be known as the Yakima Project total more than 460,000 acres, including lawns and gardens in the city of Yakima.

The City of Yakima has operated irrigation systems since the early 1900s. The system that now exists to deliver water to customers in Yakima actually consists of 66 individual, smaller systems that were consolidated almost 20 years ago into a single utility. Through that utility, the City currently provides water to about 11,000 customers.