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City of Yakima

Issues Brief

Biodegradable Bags Are Back For Fall Leaf Collection Program

For the fifth year in a row, the City of Yakima Refuse Division is giving away free biodegradable bags to Yakima residents as part of its Fall Leaf Collection Program.

Beginning on Monday, October 15th, the City's Refuse Division will give away bags at the Public Works Complex located at 2301 Fruitvale Boulevard until supplies run out. Bags can be picked up Monday through Friday between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.



Biodegradable leaf bags are primarily made of cornstarch and disappear after being composted.

The Refuse Division has about 40,000 bags to give away. When picking up bags at the Public Works Complex, residents will be asked to fill out a form indicating how many bags they have requested and at what address they should be picked up. Each household located within the city will be allowed a maximum of 20 bags.

"Most people really only need between 5 to 15 bags," said Refuse Manager Nancy Fortier. "We want people to only take as many bags as they really will need so we can get them to as many households as possible."

Refuse Division crews will begin picking up the biodegradable bags filled with leaves on October 22nd. Crews will be rotating between two designated areas within the city every other week picking up bagged leaves until December 28th. Area 1 includes parts of the city that are north of Summitview Avenue between 40th Avenue and 16th Avenue, along with the rest of the city east of 16th Avenue. Area 2 is made up of the remainder of the City. A map of the two areas, along with pickup schedules, can be found on the City website front page in the "Notable" section - <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/refuse/files/2012/09/2012leaf1up.pdf>

Only biodegradable bags distributed by the City will be picked up this year as part of the free Fall Leaf Collection Program. All other bags, including plastic or paper bags, need to be disposed of separately.

For more information about this article, contact Refuse Manager Nancy Fortier by phone (575-6005) or by e-mail (nancy.fortier@yakimawa.gov).

Breast Cancer Fundraiser Is a Big Success

For the past 5 years, the dispatchers and calltakers at SunComm, Yakima's 9-1-1 emergency services agency, have put on a fundraiser during October as part of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. What started out as a relatively small event has continued to grow each year. The 2012 fundraiser, which was held on October 8th, was no exception.

"We try to raise more money every year than we did the year before," said Stacey Garcia, a SunComm dispatcher who organized this year's event along with fellow dispatcher Katy Ybarra. "We're still working on the final tally because a few donations are still coming in, but we're easily going to top last year's total," said Garcia. "We're going to end up having raised more than \$4,200 this year compared to about \$3,600 last year. We're really proud of that."



SunComm's fundraiser is part of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

This year's total includes money raised during the event by selling a hot dog lunch and baked goods donated by SunComm employees, their friends, and family members. More than 100 pink hair extensions were also sold during the fundraiser for \$10.00 a piece. A 50/50 raffle was also held, and the winner donated his \$100 share back to the event.

"That was truly generous," said Garcia. "It's people like that who make our event so successful year after year."

Yakima manufacturing firm Orchard-Rite, LTD, Inc. also stepped forward with a \$1000 donation. Another nearly \$1000 came from students at Washington Middle School and Lewis and Clark Middle School who are part of the Yakima Police Department's G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program.

"YPD's School Resource Officers at both Washington and Lewis and Clark challenged their G.R.E.A.T. students to solicit donations," said Garcia. "And the kids came through in a big way. We can't thank them enough for going out and helping us exceed our fundraising goal. They did a really outstanding job," said Garcia.

All of the proceeds of from the SunComm fundraiser will be donated to Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital's 'Ohana Mammography Center.

For more information about this article, contact SunComm Dispatcher Stacey Garcia by phone (575-3012) or by e-mail (Stacey.garcia@yakimawa.gov).

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Yakima Wastewater Treatment Plant Reaches 75-Year Milestone

In the mid 1930s, Yakima's city leaders were being threatened with lawsuits from cities and towns in the Lower Valley because of the growing community's reliance on the Yakima River to carry away untreated sewer water. To avoid the lawsuits and to help Yakima modernize its wastewater system, the City joined forces with the Works Progress Administration ("WPA"), part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal," to build a plant to treat sewage water in order to make it safe before it made its way into the river.



Yakima's original wastewater treatment plant cost about \$315,000 and took about two years to build.

In December of 1935, a crew of about 30 WPA workers broke ground on the new plant, which was designed to treat 4 million gallons of wastewater per day in the winter and as much as 20 million gallons of wastewater in the summer. Eventually, the crew working on the plant grew to more than 300.

Originally expected to take less than a year to complete, a flood in the spring of 1936 hampered construction of the new plant. A shortage of workers in the late summer and fall of that year, combined with tough winter weather in late 1936 and early 1937, slowed progress even more.

Finally, on October 27th, 1937 the plant was finished. The final cost of the project was just over \$315,000, with a little more than half of that amount being paid by the City and the rest being covered by the WPA.

Described at the time in a newspaper article as "...one of the finest and most efficient plants to be found anywhere in the country," Yakima's facility was also heralded by the press as an "...emblem of public accomplishment for the common good".

Built to stand the test of time, some of the original equipment installed 75 years ago is still in use today, including a control building, primary clarifiers, and digesters.

"The plant was initially designed to serve a population of just over 20,000," said current Wastewater Manager Scott Schafer. "Obviously since then the facility has been expanded and improved many times over to accommodate the growth of Yakima and the surrounding area. In fact, keeping the plant up to date with the latest technology so it is able to comply with evolving environmental regulations and requirements is an ongoing process," said Schafer. "But to think that some of what was originally put in place in the 1930s is still being used today is amazing and is a true testament to the people who built the plant way back then."

For more information about this article, contact Wastewater Manager Scott Schafer by phone (249-6815) or by e-mail (scott.schafer@yakimawa.gov).