

THE CHAMBER VOICE



**Greater Yakima Chamber of
Commerce**

10 N. 9th St.
Yakima, WA. 98901
www.yakima.org
509-248-2021

July - August 2020

Message From Bob Gerst

Thank you!

In July, after two years in this role, I will turn the Chair of the Yakima Chamber of Commerce over to Kristi Foster. Let me say, our Chamber is in great hands with Kristi. This Naches born Director of our very successful program, Leadership Yakima, has been a driving force in the Chamber for many years. This mom of 5 knows how to make a positive impact through her ability to obtain buy-in and support from others and keep things organized and moving forward. Best wishes to you Kristi as you help lead this great organization!

Throughout my time as Chair, the almost 20 people who make up the Chamber Board worked tirelessly to ensure the Chamber remains relevant and provides value to our members and our greater community. Without their dedication and hard work, we would not have been as successful in meeting our members' needs. To each of them, whose efforts and contributions are too numerous to mention, I want to say, "thank you"! In addition, Verlynn and her team have not only been great colleagues at the Chamber but have become wonderful friends of mine – I appreciate you and what you each do to support Yakima.

If we look back over the last two years, we have quite a list of accomplishments/events to be proud of:

- Monthly luncheons discussing a range of topics, including: "Millennials in Today's Workplace", "Port District for Yakima", "Retail = Commerce", and several City/County elected officials spotlighted
- Ribbon cutting celebrations for over 50 new businesses
- Monthly evening mixers and weekly coffee club meetings to provide a place where "small" business people can share information



- Many presentations and letters to City Council to help articulate the needs/positions of our members
- Ongoing Government Affairs work with state officials to help communicate the needs of Yakima valley
- Monthly Business Education workshops
- Leadership Yakima which has helped develop over 800 leaders in the Valley
- Ted Robertson Community Service Awards our signature gala event to spotlight Yakima's top leaders

And on and on the list could go. And..., we are not done there. In the future we have many exciting and business focused events such as Lemonade Day and Yakima Valley Bigfoot Con. You won't want to miss any of these!

As my term as Chair ends, I've revisited why I wanted to be a part of the Yakima Chamber of Commerce to begin with. My goals were to:

1. keep current on business issues,
2. make a difference in our community, and
3. have fun

As a Chamber member and Chair of the Board - I achieved them all and then some! I hope you believe your Chamber membership has been one of the best investments for your success and that you continue to be strong and engaged members. Thank you for the honor of being your Board Chair!



Mask Up to Open Up Yakima

Business Briefs



Gesa Credit Union Named Top Credit Union in Washington State by Forbes

Forbes and Statista, a market research firm, identified America's Best -In- State Credit Unions based on an independent survey of more than 25,000 consumers. Respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding their banking relationships and were asked to rate credit unions on criteria such as overall satisfaction, trust, digital services, and financial advice. Of the nearly 5,200 credit unions in the nation, only 3.5% of credit unions were placed on the "Best-in-State" listing.

As a member-owned credit union, Gesa was built to support our members and the communities we serve. An example of this can be seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. To meet our members' needs, Gesa created many programs allowing members to extend loans without penalty, received a fee-free mortgage forbearance, or utilize low or zero interest personal loans. Additionally, Gesa immediately contributed over \$100,000 back to the community by way of donations to non-profits providing assistance to those in need. To support Gesa member businesses, gift cards were purchased to thank first responders and assist members in need.

"Being a responsible community partner and a true advocate for our members' financial well being are some of the core values we live by as an organization", added Don Miller, President and CEO of Gesa Credit Union.



Gesa and Hapo donate to the Memorial Foundation

Executive Board

Chair: Kristi Foster, Wheatland Bank

Immediate Past Chair: Bob Gerst
John I Haas

First Vice Chair: Kathy Rheame
Hub International

Past Chair Advisor: Joe Mann,
Ron's Coin & Collectibles

Past Chair Advisor: Rich Austin
Yakima Valley Sports Commission

Secretary/Treasurer: Danelle Kindell
Alegria & Company, P.S.

Legal Counsel: Jon L. Seitz
Lyon, Weigand & Gustafson PS

President/CEO: Verlynn Best

Board of Directors

Jack "JD" Bewley, McDonalds of Yakima
Steve Mercy, Yakima Theatres
Natasha Trudeau, Triumph

Actuation Systems
Bertha Alicia Garza, Centro de
Servicios Comunitarios
Terry Wheat

Jamon Rivera, Virginia Mason Memorial
Jamie Cuevas Jr., Stokes Law
Linda DiLembo, Valley Mall
Ron L. Cardey, Kwik Lok Corp.
Dr. Christopher Boggess
Anchored Chiropractic LLC

Ex-Officio Members

Ron Anderson, Yakima County
Commissioner

LTC Luke Wittmer, Base Commander
Yakima Training Center

John Cooper, Yakima Valley Tourism
Dennis Matson, YV Tech
Johnathan Smith, YCDA

Christine Cote, Perry Technical Institute
Jess Camacho, Central Washington
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Patricia Byers, City of Yakima

Member Profile



Cowiche Canyon Conservancy Celebrates 35th Anniversary

Cowiche Canyon Conservancy celebrated its 35th Anniversary in May. While our news cycles gravitate around COVID-19, we're taking a moment to take a breath, to remember the organization's history, and to let memory help guide the future.

We are a non-profit land trust in Yakima, Washington protecting our shrub-steppe habitat – a unique landscape made up of sagebrush and grasslands, flowering meadows, oak woodlands, and basalt cliffs. CCC owns and manages over 5,000 acres of land and provides more than 30 miles of trails for outdoor recreation. We conserve these natural areas and connect people to them through recreation and education.

In late 1987, CCC acquired the right of way through the canyon floor for \$1,000 and in 1990 the Cowiche Canyon Trail was established.

As the railway through Cowiche Canyon was shut down in the early 1980s, a group of local outdoor enthusiasts formed Cowiche Canyon Conservancy to protect Cowiche Canyon. These committed volunteers saw the beauty of Cowiche Canyon and an opportunity to convert the abandoned rail line into a trail. Cowiche Canyon Conservancy was incorporated as a non-profit on April 29, 1985.

The organization worked over the years to acquire small parcels of land adjacent to the old railbed in the Canyon as they became available. By 2000, CCC owned about 200 acres of land in the Canyon. In 2005, CCC had an opportunity to purchase an 1,800 acre ranch site on Cowiche Mountain, a few miles west of Cowiche Canyon. The purchase of that ranch site, known as Snow Mountain Ranch, grew CCC's ownership from 200 to 2,000 acres overnight. With more land came more trails, more visibility, and more cost to restore and maintain the landscape. We hope you can take some time to get out and enjoy this special place in the Yakima Valley.



STAYING HEALTHY OUTSIDE

PRACTICE SAFE SOCIAL DISTANCING ON THE TRAIL



Do not gather or move in groups other than who you live with.

Share the trail. Alert others when you are approaching. Pass at a safe distance (at least 6 feet).

If you have any symptoms of illness (coughing, sneezing, runny nose, fever, etc), stay home.

Avoid outhouses and benches as they may contain germs.

Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands before and after recreating. Bring hand sanitizer. Use it.

Keep trails clean. Pack out your dog waste and garbage.

Avoid places and times of high use. Leave anywhere you cannot safely maintain 6 ft of distance from others.





Your support saves lives and sustains programs at Virginia Mason Memorial

By Erin Black, CEO of The Memorial Foundation

While the world is intensely focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, The Memorial Foundation remains committed to filling gaps in support to ensure that the programs and services at Virginia Mason Memorial continue to benefit our Yakima Valley community. We are working on two fronts: supporting COVID-19 response efforts while continuing to sustain our vital core initiatives.

Community members have shown up in big ways to collectively support health-care staff and first responders. Some of our efforts in partnering with the community include organizing donations of hand-sewn masks and working to bridge the gap in childcare for health-care providers. But even as we support staff on the front lines rising to meet the challenge of the pandemic, we remain faithful to ongoing and essential programs and services:

- Babies and families still need the services of the NICU.
- Cancer patients need our support now more than ever.
- Families still need high-quality, end-of-life care as they say goodbye to loved ones.
- Health and wellness programs like diabetes prevention will become increasingly important as we work to ease the strain on our local health-care system.

Your support helps us focus on supporting our health-care workers when they need it most. Your gifts are truly appreciated and cherished. When this pandemic passes, your support will ensure that essential and lifesaving services to our community continue.

Thank you for your support during this crisis. Your contribution is a powerful response. We are so proud to be a part of this community. Your partnership is invaluable.

Filling the Gap: Hand-sewn Masks & PPE Supply

As a true testament to our community's can-do spirit, we have received close to 2,000 emails and phone calls from community members who want to donate masks, gowns, gloves, and other personal protective equipment (PPE). So the hospital can focus on providing care to patients, The Memorial Foundation has taken the lead in fielding the calls and gathering donations. It has been awe-inspiring to see our community's powerful response in support of our local medical providers.

Your support helps us coordinate and allocate critical items to safeguard our most precious asset in the COVID-19 response—our health-care providers.

Thank you for partnering with us as we bridge the gap — not just financially but through the powerful community connections you provide. Your financial gift meets urgent needs today and funds essential health-care programs tomorrow.



Business Briefs



Parks and Recreation Launches "Step Up & Park It"

City of Yakima

Walk for exercise, visit local parks and you might win a prize in Yakima Parks and Recreation's "Step Up & Park It" program that begins Monday, July 6th and continues through August 31st.

This free, 8 week program is designed to help you stay active while visiting local parks. Participants of all fitness levels are invited to join. Simply track and report your steps. The goal is to set progressive daily step goals to reach 10,000 steps per day by the end of the challenge. The program is available through Challenge Runner. If you do not have a Challenge Runner account, sign up at <https://www.challengerunner.com/enroll/efb6xz-2cth>. If you are already a Challenge Runner member, log in to your account and enter challenge code efb6xz-2cth. Track steps manually, with a fitness tracker, device or app and log steps into the challenge app.

"We encourage people to explore their local parks or anywhere that is safe to walk – with social distancing precautions – while creating a consistent walking habit in their everyday lives," said Parks and Recreation Manager Ken Wilkinson.

There are requirements and incentives for receiving a Step Up & Park It participant t-shirt, as well as eligibility requirements for prize drawings at the end of each two-week interval.

Individuals who meet the requirement for each interval will be entered into a drawing to win prizes at the end of each two week interval.

Call 575-6020 or visit <https://yakimaparks.com/> for more information about Yakima Parks and Recreation.

Chamber Members who renewed their Memberships.

**Please support these businesses that
support your Chamber!**

Members for 90- 99 Years:

First American Title of Yakima

Members for 80- 89 Years:

Keith & Keith Funeral Services

Rankin Equipment Co.

Members for 70 - 79 Years:

Cook Northwest

Johnson's Auto Glass & Upholstery

Members for 60 - 69 Years:

Terril, Lewis & Wilke Insurance Inc.

Members for 50 - 59 Years:

Gress-Kinney-Parrish Insurance Center

KAPP TV - Apple Valley Broadcasting, Inc.

Members for 40 - 49 Years:

Charter Communications

Comprehensive Health Care

Fiddlesticks

Lee Peterson Buick, GMC & Cadillac

WorkSource Yakima County



Lemonade Day Fall 2020

learn more at

lemonadeday.org/yakima-county

Chamber Members who renewed their Memberships.

Please support these businesses that support your Chamber!



Members for 30 - 39 Years:

Colonial Lawn & Garden, Inc.
Fuel Injection Systems, Inc.
J.L. Smith CO.
Lally Chiropractic Clinic
Sporthaus, Inc.
Yakima Greenway Foundation

Members for 20-29 Years:

Action Collectors, Inc.
Apple Tree Golf Course, Bar & Grill
Atlas Staffing
Central Washington Refrigeration
Comfort Suites Yakima
H.D. Fowler Co., Inc.
Ken Gaub Ministries
Petersen CPA's & Advisors, PLLC
Red Lion Hotel Yakima Center
South Central Workforce Development Council
Stewart Subaru
Sundown M Ranch
Valley Lock & Key Service
Washington State Employees Credit Union
Yakima Athletic Club

Members for 15-19 Years:

Apple Valley Eye Center
AW Roofing of Yakima, LLC
Cacchiotti, Lawrence F., DDS, MS
Columbia Distributing
Fosseen's Home and Hearth
Les Schwab Tire Center
Leslie & Campbell Roofing, Inc.
Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
Steve Hahn's Mercedes, Volkswagen, Kia
Villbrandt, Stark & Moore, PLLC

Members for 10- 14 Years:

Abadan
Aesthetic & Family Dentistry
Dedicated Realty, LLC

Members for 5 - 9 Years:

Centerplate
Cowiche Canyon Kitchen & Icehouse Bar
Fieldstone Memory Care
Finance of America Mortgage
Gesa Credit Union
Image Point Mobile Medical Services
Law Office Sonia Rodriguez True
Rod's House
Safe Yakima Valley
Total Care Home Health
Wild Fire Services Environmental
Willamette Dental Group

Members for 1 - 4 Years:

Best Western Plus Yakima Hotel
Bia Flex Printing
Central Washington Asphalt
ENIGMA, Inc.
Heritage Distilling Co. Roslyn
Little Caesars
Fatbeam, LLC
Kelley Connect
Motel 6 Yakima
Norm's of Yakima
Pride Polymers, LLC
Ridgeline Office Systems
RJ's Tire Pros & Auto Experts
Quality Cleaning
Spectrum Reach
Varela Legal, PLLC
Water Fire Restaurant & Bar
Yakima Country Club
Yakima Valley Trolleys

Chamber Staff

Verlynn Best, President & CEO
Amy Lopez, Operations & Marketing
Trena Schab, Director of Member Services
Citlali Mason, Office Assistant

Mission Statement



"The Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce is an organization that promotes pride in our diverse communities through positive, active leadership aimed at creating a cohesive, successful business climate in our County."