

Wakima

All America City
Community of Neighbors

Here's your entry form for the...

2000 AWC Municipal Achievement Awards



Please check the category you are entering (mark only one).

General Entry Category:

- Up to 1,499 population
- 1,500 to 4,999 population
- 5,000 to 14,999 population
- 15,000 to 39,999 population
- Over 40,000 population

Special Award (open to all populations):

Developing Citizen Involvement (2 awards)

My city has developed or supports an innovative citizen involvement program.

- Under 40,000 population
- Over 40,000 population

Title of Project Citizen Code Review Committee/Enhanced Code Enforcement Program

City Yakima Population 65,500

Form Completed by:

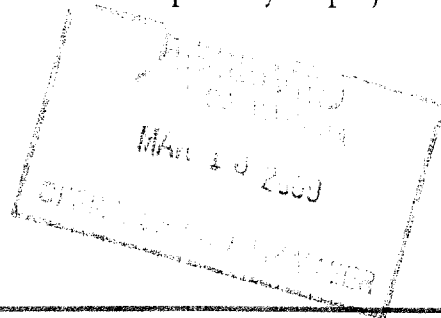
Name Marketa George Oliver

Title Administrative Assistant to the City Manager

Phone 509/575-6040 Date April 24, 2000

Fill out the 2000 AWC Municipal Achievement Awards entry form above, attach two copies of your project summary and mail to Sarah Partin by **Monday, May 15, 2000** at:

Association of Washington Cities
1076 Franklin Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501-1346



Association of Washington Cities
1076 Franklin Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501-1346

BULK MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 201
OLYMPIA, WA

2000 AWC Municipal Achievement Awards City of Yakima

Citizens Code Review Committee/Enhanced Code Enforcement Program

The City of Yakima submits for consideration in the special award category the Enhanced Code Enforcement Program. The program represents a three-year joint effort by citizens, business people, landlords and City staff to create an efficient and practical code enforcement process to improve conditions in our inner-city neighborhoods.

The City developed a code enforcement program in 1992 with one full-time Code Enforcement Officer. A second position was added in 1997 and nuisance complaint inspections totaled nearly 3,000 per year. The program has enjoyed a 90+% success rate in obtaining voluntary abatement of violations, such as debris-filled yards, weedy lots, illegal conversions, etc. It was the remaining 5-10%, however, that continued to blight our community because of the City's slow civil and criminal penalty process. One case in point took five years to resolve from the time of first inspection to completion of demolition by the City. We needed new tools.

In 1997, City staff surveyed jurisdictions within Washington and from across the country searching for model code enforcement programs that would aid in the development of Yakima's concept of "enhanced code enforcement." In August, 1998, a Citizens Code Review Committee was formed by the City Council. For four months, dozens of citizens, business people, landlords and City staff met with a facilitator and developed a three-part program to improve our code enforcement efforts. The proposal included the creation of: 1) a "Code Hotline" phone number to report violations; 2) "Good Neighbor Handbook" to educate the community about codes and neighborhood standards, and; 3) a "Community Review Board" to hear cases, assess administrative fees and authorize forced abatement of violations. In April 1999, the Yakima City Council approved the recommendations of the Citizens Code Review Committee.

Code Hotline established

The Code Hotline was established, giving citizens one number to call for various concerns and complaints, thereby simplifying the process of filing a complaint. A new Department Assistant III position was created and filled, at a cost of approximately \$35,000 per year, including salary and benefits. This position receives complaints from the hotline, creates a case record in a database and forwards the complaints to the appropriate Code Enforcement Officer or to other City departments. This position also serves as clerk of the Community Review Board and code enforcement support. The Code Hotline was activated in June, 1999. Since then, the Code Enforcement Department Assistant has received more than 2,000 calls. From these calls, a case is created in the City's complaint database and a hard copy printed for the Code Enforcement Officers. Each complaint is assigned a tracking number, which is also

given to the complainant so they can check back on the status of their complaint. Complaints falling under the jurisdiction of other departments are printed directly in those offices through the City's computer network. Cases are tracked by two reports generated each month; one shows the current status of active cases and the other lists all cases that have been abated or closed.

Community Review Board established

A new City ordinance was adopted and a Community Review Board formed. The ordinance brought various code violations, nuisances and illegal conditions under the authority of the Community Review Board. The Board consists of seven volunteers who hold public, televised hearings twice a month. The first Community Review Board hearing was held in November, 1999. Potential cases for the Board are chosen by the Code Enforcement Officers and are typically more severe in nature. A Notice and Order is issued and property owners are given between 10 and 30 days to correct illegal conditions or enter into a Voluntary Correction Agreement. A Voluntary Correction Agreement is a contract between the property owner and the City which allows the owner additional time to correct the illegal conditions according to specific requirements. If the owner fails to correct the violations or enter into an agreement with the City, the case is presented to the Board. The Board hears testimony on the case, determines if illegal conditions exist and can assess Administrative fees; allow the owner additional time to make corrections; authorize the City to correct the conditions; authorize the City to correct the conditions at the owner's expense; or dismiss the case. Should a property owner breach a Voluntary Correction Agreement, Administrative fees are automatically assessed and the City authorized to correct the illegal conditions.

Good Neighbor Handbook developed

Finally, an easy to read, bilingual handout was developed to educate the public on nuisance and zoning codes and what is expected of them as members of the community. The handouts are distributed through the City's utility bills and staff and are available to the public through local banks, real estate offices, landlord associations and at various City offices.

The City is committed to improving the Enhanced Code Enforcement Program and expanding its scope, as necessary. An evaluation of the program is scheduled following the program's first anniversary. At that time improvements will be considered. Also, the Citizens Code Review Committee is planning to address relatively "new" issues or problems not currently regulated by City Code, such as graffiti and property maintenance.

With the Enhanced Code Enforcement Program still fairly new, all involved continue to learn the process, improve the program and listen to suggestions for future changes. Word seems to be spreading quickly of the enhanced code enforcement process and its consequences as demonstrated by the program's immediate results in streamlining abatement and by the public's favorable response.

Great Neighbors... Great City

Fences

- Build them on your own property.
- In the front yard, they can only be four (4) feet tall.
- In the backyard, make sure they are not taller than six (6) feet.
- Make sure that they do not prevent drivers or walkers from being able to see clearly – help your neighbors avoid accidents.

Fences on Commercial Property

- They cannot exceed (8) feet in height behind the required setback in the front yard, rear yard, and sideyards that do not border a street.

What are things that are harmful or dangerous to the neighborhood?

- Holes that are large enough someone could fall into or injure themselves by stepping into.
- Decaying or rotting animals or food (they attract rats into the neighborhoods and smell badly).
- Dangerous left over chemicals such as oil or paint that is left out so that children or animals can get into it.
- Chemicals such as gasoline that give off bad odors if kept in open containers can make people sick.
- Farm animals, such as chickens, should not be kept in the city and should be returned to the farm. There just is not enough room in the city for these animals.
- Old refrigerators, stoves, other appliances, and old cars are child killers. Take the doors off of them and arrange to have them taken away.

When do cars become problems?

- Old cars left out become unsafe play areas for children and homes for rats and other rodents.
- Cars that block the vision or access of walkers or drivers when parked in alleys, near signs, in driveways, or sidewalks can be ticketed or taken away.

Questions ... Call 576-6657

What about leaves and weeds? Can we burn these?

- The City does not allow you to burn leaves and yard trimmings because clean air is important to us. You can compost or have it taken away to the dump.
- Piles of weeds and leaves catch fire easily. Be sure to clean them up so that you can keep your neighborhood safe.

What does the law say about snow and ice shoveling during the winter months?

- Snow and ice must be cleaned off the sidewalks (or areas where people walk) by 9:00 in the morning every day after a snow fall.
- Sand, salt and snowmelt etc. can and should be used for areas where people can slip and fall even after the snow is shoveled.

What about trees, shrubs, and weeds in the neighborhood?

- Sometime trees and shrubs and even flowers grow so large that they block the view for drivers. They must be trimmed.
- Weeds become fire hazards. Be sure to keep your neighborhood safe by weeding your property.

When do pets become problems?

- Do not allow your pet to wander free around the neighborhood. Keep your pets in your yard.
- Barking dogs disrupt neighborhoods. Keep them quiet.
- Vicious animals are dangerous and can maim or kill.
- Farm animals belong on a farm not in a city.
- Dogs must be licensed and must wear the license attached to their collars.

When is noise considered a disturbance?

- Any noise that, by its intensity, volume, frequency, duration, or character, disturbs others and can be heard from 50 feet away is considered to be a public disturbance.

May I work from home?

- Yes, but you need the proper license.
- You cannot change the normal residential look of your neighborhood.
- You cannot add electrical or mechanical equipment that would change the fire rating of your home or make your neighborhood a fire danger.
- It cannot affect the water and sewer in your neighborhood.
- It cannot increase the amount of traffic in your area.
- You cannot hang an outside sign that takes away from the neighborhood.
- Be sure to check the City codes and talk to inspectors before you start a business in your home.

May I build on to my home, apartment house, or trailer or construct another building, or add a trailer for people to live in on my own property?

- Many laws cover this. You need to do some research.
- There are laws on plumbing, size of rooms, number of dwellings per lot, how many people can live in a dwelling, etc.
- Check the code before you make any changes to your property.

Are there rules that cover yard sales?

- You may only hold a yard sale twice during a calendar year.
- The yard sale can last up to three (3) days and then everything must be cleaned up and put away or taken off the property.



Yakima

“A Community of Neighbors”

We believe...

Well kept homes and apartments are safe places for infants, children, teens, parents, and the elderly.

We believe in the Golden Rule.

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

The city codes are the laws created to safeguard the neighborhoods.

It is the intention that this booklet will help you become a better neighbor by understanding the codes.

If you have further questions about the codes, please call 576-6657



**Code Complaints and Questions:
576-6657**

**Office of Neighborhood Service
(Resources to help you clean up your property)
576-6160**



1994

**Watch for more detailed
inserts in your utility bills**

**Se pueden obtener copias del folleto en el
Departamento de Códigos**