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Title of Project: RENTON POLICE DEPARTMENT CITIZEN'S ACADEMY

Municipality: CITY OF RENTON

Address: 200 MILL AVE S., RENTON, WA, 98055

Population: 41,688

Entry Category (circle one):  
I. Up to - 1,499 population  
II. 1,500- 4,999 population  
III. 5,000 - 14,999 population  
IV. 15,000 - 39,999 population  
V. Over 40,000 population

Name: Earl Clymer

Title: Mayor, City of Renton

Signature: *Earl Clymer*

Date: 5/20/91

The 1991  
AWC Municipal  
Achievement Awards

38-1

CITY OF RENTON

POLICE DEPARTMENT CITIZEN'S ACADEMY

The City of Renton Police Department's Citizen's Academy began in September of 1989. Renton's academy is modeled after programs in Commerce City CO and Orlando FL, and was the second of its type in the state, following a program in Tacoma. The goal of the program is to create better understanding and communication between citizens and police through education. The intent is not to produce civilians trained in law enforcement, but to help Renton residents and businessmen better understand the City's police department. This is an opportunity for the citizens of Renton to know more about the men and women who are protecting their community and why they make the decisions they do.

Citizen's Academy is 11 weeks in length. A sample schedule is attached in the appendices. Classes are held in the evening, and each 2 hour class covers a different aspect of the Renton Police Department. Citizen's Academy participants are presented with frank and candid explanations of how each division functions. They learn of the successes as well as the problems and how they are handled. The academy also includes an optional 3 hour ride with a patrol officer, and tours of the jail, the communications center and the police station.

Citizen's Academy participants come to class with a variety of backgrounds, questions, and philosophies about police officers. They range from public officials and Block Watch

members to school teachers and housewives. Some city employees have taken the course as well as members of the Chamber of Commerce. Class size is limited to 24 participants, so a waiting list to take the academy has quickly developed.

Three academies are held per year, with a total cost of approximately \$600.00 per year. The budget includes funds to provide students with a notebook, handouts pertinent to the topics, graduation certificates and refreshments. In some situations overtime is paid to instructors, but instructors also speak on-duty, on their own time, or take time off in lieu of overtime. Arranging schedules for department personnel to speak, for class members to visit the jail and communications center, and to ride on patrol is a complex job to say the least. But the effort is worth the investment.

At the end of each class session, participants are asked to evaluate the lesson they have just completed. With few exceptions, the evaluations are good or excellent. Another indication of interest from participants is their almost total lack of absenteeism, and the fact that many people have requested to attend the academy again. For this reason, an "advanced" academy was developed to keep in contact with academy graduates. All academy graduates are invited back for quarterly meetings on topics of their choice. Topics have included Crimes Against Children, Hostage Negotiation, Personal Safety and Crime Trends.

Two unsolicited letters of appreciation are attached as appendices to this nomination, as is a final critique submitted by a couple who attended the academy.

What the department gains in goodwill can't compare to the benefits the community gains by knowing more about their police department. Participants gain a better understanding of the department's decision-making processes, how and why policies are created, as well as what an officer faces everyday. More importantly, citizens can also determine more accurately how effective the department is in serving the community.

Citizen's Academy is also a two way educational process. While citizens are learning all about what police officers do on a daily basis, officers also are hearing how citizens feel about issues and why. The department has developed a better feel for the concerns of residents and the perceptions they have of the Renton Police Department.

Citizen's Academy is creating a growing nucleus of responsible, well-informed citizens with the potential of influencing public opinion with regards to police practice and service. And as the citizens become more aware of the needs of law enforcement, they tend to become more aware of city wide issues too, becoming loyal supporters of city government.

CITIZEN'S ACADEMY IV

9-25-90	Chief's Welcome	Chief Wallis
	Orientation	Brooke Owen
	Recruitment, Hiring and Training	Floyd Eldridge
10-2-90	Patrol Operations	Lt. Dennis Gerber
10-9-90	Patrol Services	Bob Seelye Fredrick Yohann
10-16-90	Crime Prevention DARE	Penny Bryant Tanya Hanks
10-23-90	General Investigations	Lt. Joe Peach
10-30-90	Special Investigations: Drugs	Lt. Joe Peach
11-06-90	Special Investigations: Gangs	Lt. Joe Peach
11-13-90	Use of Force/ Defensive Tactics	Mark Day Eddie Goodman
11-20-90	Firearms,	Ken Cramer
11-27-90	Response to Traumatic Incidents	Captain Garry Anderson
12-04-90	K9 Demonstration	Dave Skelton
	Graduation	

S.a.

CITY OF RENTON

APR 20 1990

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

3306 NE 11th Place.  
Renton, WA. 98056  
April 19, 1990

Mayor Earl Clymer,  
City of Renton  
Municipal Building  
200 Mill Ave. South,  
Renton, Wa. 98055

Dear Mayor Clymer:

My wife and I both want to commend the City of Renton, the Renton Police Department and particularly Brooke Owen for the excellent program they have made available to the citizens of the city. I'm referring to the Renton Police Department "Citizens Academy". Brooke, as part of her job as Crime Prevention Coordinator and working with many others, has put together an excellent 12 week program which will enable people to begin to understand the functioning of the department.

The course includes speakers from the various departments, all participating on their own time. In addition to the lectures, demonstrations in "weapons" and "defensive tactics" and another by a K-9 unit heightened interest. Visits to the department facilities here, the 911 Valley Communications Center in Kent, and a brief ride with an on-duty patrol officer served to generate awareness.

Overall, the speakers have been a credit to the city; courteous, knowledgeable and always available to respond to questions. Programs such as this, run this well, can only serve to boost the awareness of the citizens. The program is a credit to all concerned.

Thanks to Brooke and all those who worked to make this available.

Sincerely,

*Ralph M. Evans*      *Patricia Evans*  
Ralph & Patricia Evans

*Read at Council Meeting 5/7/90  
cc: Police Chief  
Brooke Owen*

38-6

December 13, 1990

John Twaddle  
3726 N.E. 10th LN  
Renton, Wa. 98056


TO: Chief Wallis

I would like to thank the people of the Citizen's Academy for allowing me the unique opportunity to see first-hand how your operation works. I was quite impressed with the program and how the people associated with it handled the critical day to day situations. A program, such as the one I was involved in, is a real eye-opener for the layman. I recommend the program wholeheartedly.

A special thanks to Officer Tracy Merrill and Audrey (at the front desk). Officer Merrill had the generosity and good nature to "put up with me" for the 5 1/2 hour orientation and Audrey was a pleasure to deal with as she skillfully assisted the officers out in the field.

I wish you all the best of luck. Once again, thank you for the invaluable experience.

Sincerely,

  
John Twaddle

## THE RENTON POLICE DEPARTMENT CITIZEN'S ACADEMY

Have you ever wondered what *THE RENTON POLICE DEPARTMENT CITIZEN'S ACADEMY* really is all about? We as citizens of the City of Renton have, so we went through the academy, 10 weeks worth, one night a week. Did we enjoy it? More than enjoy it! We got information that was not only first hand - it was Enlightening! Informative! And Interesting! Let me tell you more.

This article is being written by a private citizen on something that I feel the City of Renton and other law enforcement agencies/cities may want to continue and consider. We as citizens can get involved and help our local law enforcement agencies just by volunteering with the local government; starting Block Watches and being committed as concerned citizens for one another. It doesn't cost anything and the rewards/benefits are phenomenal! (And you feel like you are doing something for your community, because you are).

So what is this all about?

First of all let's consider your local (county or city) protection. You pay for them - why not use them? We began the first evening going through, in depth, what the Renton Police Department is all about - with the Chief of Police (Alan Wallis), who gave a presentation, and an officer who explained how the City recruited, hired, and trained their people. Believe me folks, it isn't easy. As the next few weeks went on, we discovered that the comrade among the police officers is commendable. Each division of the Police Department is so proud of what they do - that each believes their division/job is the best area to be working. This includes: Traffic, Patrols, Investigations, K-9, etc. They really enjoy what they do too! Incidentally, for those of you who have perhaps fallen into "purchasing" (???) a traffic violation and feel that YOU were caught in the day's quota - forget that! The Traffic cops don't have quotas! They can write as many as they want!

The personal tour of the various divisions in the City of Renton, including the jail (just visiting), the records area, etc., is an eye opener. I cannot imagine staying at the local jail in lieu of a hotel - the clientele doesn't always welcome visitors!

As to the **9-1-1**. One of the better opportunities is to go on a tour of Valley Communications Center - better know as the 9-1-1. When my wife and I went there, we were amazed at how much went on at once. We were introduced as citizens from the Renton Police Department Citizens Academy. We sat with each of the 9-1-1 operators, (I am somewhat curious (my wife says nosey) as to what is going on in the City, and here was my calling). Talk about cool and level headed as well as knowledgeable people! They have procedures for the procedures. I also found that 99.9% are congenial, want to help and are definitely type "A" personalities. Did you know that when you call 9-1-1, two things will occur:

1. They not only know where you are calling from, but they have the name, address and telephone number of that location.
2. If you hang-up - they are going to keep trying to call you back and may dispatch an officer to where you are calling from - and they will usually address you by name.

9-1-1 is a source for both emergency and non-emergency situations. A 9-1-1 operator can even teach (during a real emergency) how to perform CPR, or the Heimlick Maneuver. Don't discount or argue with them. They are in control of what is happening and they know how to get the right people involved. 9-1-1 has the communications to contact the County, other Cities, and State Agencies. They can be used for any emergency situation. Use them. You are paying for it.

The gangs and drug crimes and what is being done, was an entire evening alone. We have found that the CRIPS and BLOODS and other gangs that are in California, are in-deed close by. The turf issues, the circumstances and problems here in our state are different than what California is dealing with however. We discovered what the various drugs are, what they look like, values, and what their "street names" are and what we as citizens can do if we suspect a drug related problem persists in our neighborhood.

Crime Prevention and what we can do as Citizens was presented and discussed. There are a lot of volunteer activities available through your local city Crime Prevention Division. Why not organize a Block Watch or help out as a volunteer with the City of Renton? We are going to. Try it, you'll like it!

Perhaps one of the very best parts of our 10-week course was the "Ride-Along." I don't mean that you are arrested, I mean as a private citizen riding along with a Police Officer. We saw everything: domestic violence; speeding drivers; how the radar works; a DWI and my favorite - a blue light, siren, with of course an accelerated rate of speed. Yes! I was pumped! (What an adrenaline rush)! Not all nights are the same. I was impressed with the way each officer "keeps tabs" on his or her fellow officers. They are a team, and very in-tune with one another. There are women on the force, and they are excellent officers. The police officer's ability to "defuse" a situation is a real art in itself. What could be explosive, the officer(s) can handle quite effectively through tact, wisdom and experience.

There is another side of the police officers that most of us do not observe. They have a spouse, some with kids, they work hard and are really held accountable for their actions. We were given, throughout this 10-weeks, some of the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures as well as what happens if they are broken or not adhered to by the police officers. These police Officers are watched closer than anyone working for a private firm.

But police officers have bad days too! They are human just like us.

One of the things we discovered is that these men and women have feelings. The trauma encountered after a rape, child abuse case, domestic violence, a fellow police officer being shot, or even a situation when the police officer has had to shoot someone, is real. The personal stories we heard are real. There is a professional counseling service and chaplains available to the officers, 24-hours a day. What makes this so special? Ten to fifteen years ago, this was unheard of, because it wasn't "macho" or "manly. Today it is okay to admit fear, feelings, concerns, you name it. This is what is making our City of Renton and other law enforcement agencies better. The cities, counties & States are taking a personal and humane approach to their employees.

Yes, we enjoyed our one night a week class. It was one of our highlights of the week. There are all age groups, couples and singles. The classes are approximately 20-25 people. The speakers are excellent, informative and interesting. The K-9 demonstration and other information is real and to the point. You are made aware of possible problems and what is being done to alleviate them. It gives everyone a good feeling about what our police department is doing and where our taxes are going.

A special thanks to Mrs. Brooke Owen of The City of Renton Crime Prevention Division, for her splendid coordination of these classes and her feedback from questions we always seemed to come up with after each session. Her dedication and professional support to the Crime Prevention Program makes it one of the best run programs the City of Renton has to offer. We as City of Renton citizens ought to be very proud of our Police Department.

*Sam & Pat Cheyne*  
Sam & Pat Cheyne  
727 Shelton Avenue NE  
Renton, WA 98056

# N.W. INNOVATIONS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR CITIES, WATER AND SEWER DISTRICTS

SUMMER 1990

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

## INTRODUCTION

This is the second edition of our newsletter. We were pleased with the response to our first one. We will continue to improve it so that smaller cities and water and sewer districts in Washington and Oregon have a specialized source of information aimed at solving management challenges. Our focus is on good ideas that are working well in an agency like yours. As a private non-profit agency, we do not represent any level of government, nor do we represent any suppliers of products or services. We hope to supplement the excellent, but different services available to you from your associations of municipalities and districts.

## CITIZEN ACADEMY

Brooke Owen, the Renton, Washington, Police Department's crime prevention coordinator, has started a program that should become popular throughout the Northwest and not only in Police Departments—a "Citizen's Academy" that teaches people how the police department works. One evening a week for 10

*Brooke Owen*



## Inside:

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weeks, participants learn about procedures, policy and patrol, taught by a different officer each week.

A course for citizens, culminating in the award of certificates by elected officials, could be offered in every phase of local government. Perhaps there would be better understanding and community support for bond issues and rate increases if voters have been attending Citizen Academies in "Water/Wastewater Facilities and Operations" or "Planning and Development in your Town/District."

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Every public agency is interested in providing more and better jobs for local residents and in improving the general economic health of the community. For some, this means expanding the diversity of the local economy by bringing in new kinds of businesses. For others it means encouraging the expansion of existing commercial and industrial enterprises. Key to either method of growth is the availability of public water and wastewater facilities.

In water systems, not only must sufficient amounts of water under adequate pressure be available, some major potential users require especially good quality water. Breweries, hospitals, food processors and refineries all seem fussy (for very different reasons) about

*Continued on page 2*

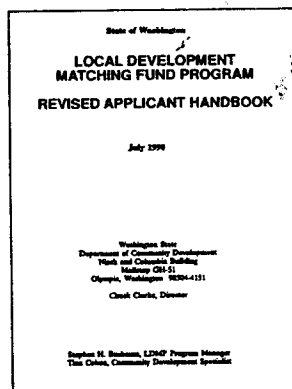
the quality of water received. In these cases, the purveyor has to be interested in the treatment as well as the supply and distribution of water.

Sewage collection and treatment are fundamental requirements for economic development. Unless your wastewater collection and treatment facilities have adequate capacity, commercial and especially industrial employers will look elsewhere to expand, locate or relocate.

Economic development also hinges on the availability of all levels of housing. An employer wants to attract a solid labor force and workers want to live near jobs. Efficient residential development also depends on available public water and wastewater facilities. New technologies are becoming available in the wastewater service area, providing affordable services to large lots and property that don't percolate effluent. We all must be able to absorb the growth in multi-family as well as single family housing if we want the tax base and other benefits deriving from commercial and industrial growth.

In Washington, the Local Development Matching Fund Program in the state Department of Community Development is accepting applications for funding projects which will "build local and regional capacity to initiate and carry forward effective economic development." This program provides a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$25,000. Up to half of the local match for projects may be in-kind contributions.

Northwest Small Cities Services will complete LDMF applications, ready for the signature of the local agency Chief Executive Officer, for \$1,500.00. Please call us at (206) 524-7482 for this assistance.



## TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Small public governments want a fair policy to guide travel reimbursement for annual or more frequent out-of-town travel by elected officials or key staff. They need a policy that is generous enough to provide a sufficient amount of funding for the traveler yet frugal enough to protect the taxpayers. (You probably don't want to be considered cheap, but you don't want to have an open check-book.) One method is to pay actual expenses for meals and lodging to all or to some percentage of the Runzheimer Index. This Index is published regularly for all major cities and is available by subscription from 555 Skokie Blvd. #340, Northbrook, IL 60062. It is often available in local libraries.



## PRIVATE PUBLIC WORKS

As costs rise, cities and special purpose districts are getting more sophisticated about minimum standard requirements for development. This is increasing the pressure on cities and water and sewer districts to permit the construction of private infrastructure to be maintained by homeowner associations. These facilities often include smaller-than-standard water and sewer lines, package wastewater treatment plants, and narrower than normal streets. Sufficiently large pipes and arterial street widths are rarely built.

Developers promise to maintain the services in perpetuity, but after the property is sold, the new owners often come to the public agency for maintenance, arguing that they are paying as much for water and sewer service as

the other residents and should be entitled to equal maintenance. The jurisdiction then either accepts the burden of expensive maintenance and upgrading or faces a resentful group of homeowners who will oppose every request for public support.

The answer lies in adopting and sticking with high standards for the construction of private facilities or not permitting them at all. This is the time for all good men and women (elected officials) to come to the aid of their management and engineering staff. We have rarely known any staff who views its responsibilities as long term, to recommend the short term benefits of private public works construction and maintenance.

## SPECIAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Every public body has had the experience of facing a challenging problem and the suggestion that a special committee should be appointed to solve it. We are speaking, as examples, of a neighborhood problem or a rate increase or the consideration of a new function or service area.

Our recommendation is to tread carefully. Committees, once appointed, have a way of extending their lives forever and ever. People enjoy participating in the public decision-



making process, and feelings can be hurt if expectations of long tenure are suddenly crushed by the elected officials' interest in getting the committee out of their hair.

You can avoid this nasty dilemma by appointing all committees with a specific charge and for a definite period of time. If everyone understands in the beginning that the committee will be finished with its work after three months or a year, feelings will not be hurt. Great benefits are gained by involving the diversity of the community in public decision-making processes. It should be done, however, with clear understanding about the length of anticipated service.

## GOOD IDEA EXCHANGE

We intend to publish a lot of good ideas in future issues of this newsletter. Please call us or drop us a note about innovation in your agency. We will share it with all of the cities and water and sewer districts to whom this newsletter is sent.

This newsletter is written, published and distributed by

Northwest Small Cities Services  
John R. Collins, Executive Director  
6589 Purdue Avenue NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
(206) 524-7482

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# N.W. INNOVATIONS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR CITIES, WATER AND SEWER DISTRICTS

*Published by Northwest Small Cities Services*

The production and distribution of this newsletter was made possible through a generous contribution from:

**Romac Industries, Inc.**

1064 4th Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98134

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pipe tapping tools.