

Volume 34...Issue 10
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YAKIMA VALLEY CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENTS

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Grandview
Granger
Harrah
Mabton
Moxee
Naches
Selah
Sunnyside
Tieton
Toppenish
Union Gap
Wapato
Yakima
Yakima County
Zillah

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Yakima County Commission
Jim Restucci
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HAPPY
HALLOWEEN!

311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
Yakima, WA 98901
509-574-1550
FAX 509-574-1551
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YVCOG Receives National Transportation Planning Award

By Drew Miller, Sr. Transportation Planner

The recently updated *Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2007-2027* has received a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Excellence in Regional Transportation Award.

YVCOG Executive Director, J. Page Scott, accepted the Excellence in Regional Transportation Award at the National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference held in Chattanooga, Tennessee in late September.

Out of the 30 projects selected nationally to receive an Excellence in Regional Transportation Award, the *Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2007-2027* was the only project selected from Washington State. Being recognized by the NADO Research Foundation is a wonderful accomplishment for the Yakima Valley region in the area of rural and small metropolitan transportation planning.

SOLSTICE

Drew Miller, Sr. Transportation Planner

A solstice occurs twice a year, whenever earth's axis tilts the most toward or away from the sun, causing the sun to be farthest north or south at noon. The name is derived from Latin sol (sun) and sistere (to stand still), because at the solstice, the sun stands still in declination, that is, its movement north or south is minimal.



That may be one scientific definition of the solstice, but on September 11 the Yakima Valley welcomed the arrival of a different kind of solstice that will appear more than twice a year. New artwork titled "Solstice" is being installed on both sides of the SR 24 bridge over I-82 as part of a corridor revitalization effort. The artwork consists of two large half-suns measuring 25 feet wide by 8 feet high, and four smaller suns measuring 8-by-6 feet.

The Legislature allocated \$52.6 million for the road and bridge work on SR 24, which is scheduled for completion in November. Approximately \$456,000 of that was allocated for the artwork, landscaping and other beautification efforts. The TRANS-ACTION committee chose the solstice design from several competing entries.

Farewell . . .

Michael Buchanan, YVCOG's Senior Land Use Planner for the past 6 years, has moved on to serve as the Director of the Big Bend Economic Development Council. Michael's last day at YVCOG was September 28. While we will miss him at the YVCOG office, we wish Michael every success in his new position.

Good luck, Michael!

Local Government Grants for Permit Tracking Systems

By Saadia Hassan, Planner

The State of Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) has recently announced a grant opportunity for local governments in certain Washington Counties interested in acquiring and implementing new or upgraded electronic permit tracking systems. Grant applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

- ⇒ Be a local government agency located in a county with fewer than 350,000 residents
- ⇒ Be a local government agency responsible for issuing development permits; and
- ⇒ Have local matching funds

The state legislature has provided \$175,000 for each of the 2008 and 2009 State Fiscal Years to be distributed in this grant program to improve systems for the management and tracking of land use and development permits. These improvements will facilitate a more streamlined permit review process and will upgrade and streamline the actual technologies for permit tracking that are in place at the selected local governments. It will also support the future local, state and federal level multi-agency web-based communications for sharing of common project information.

The funded electronic permit tracking systems will also help local jurisdiction report on performance by tracking information such as permit turnaround times, the percent of applications that are considered complete on first submittal, the number of review cycles required, total processing fees and cost, and information about what other permits or approvals are required.

The application deadline for the Fiscal Year 2008 is October 11, 2007, by 12:00 noon, Pacific Daylight Saving Time. Proposals must be submitted electronically as an attachment to an e-mail to Jan McMullen, the RFGP Coordinator, at jan.mcmullen@ofm.wa.gov. Grants will be awarded by October 31, 2007. Grant funds awarded for State Fiscal year 2008 must be expended by June 30, 2008.

For further information visit <http://ofm.wa.gov/contracts/procurement/postings.asp>.

Wheel Options Rocks!

By Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator

I was **"Just Wondering?"** Would you be interested in seven days of unsurpassed beauty, walking among the uniquely colored towering cliffs, massive canyon walls and freestanding arches of Utah's spectacular Zion National Park? From **October 8-19**, you will have some "Wheel Options." Participate in Wheel Options, say goodbye to the single occupancy vehicle (SOV) and meet other commuters who carpool, vanpool or ride the bus to work. You can even try compressing your work schedule, work from home, bicycle or walk to work.

Wheel Options is sponsored by the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) and the Washington State Ridesharing Organization (WSRO). Join thousands of others across the state that will choose to not drive alone to work, at least twice during Wheel Options. By exercising your options, you will also be eligible for some great statewide prizes, including an **exciting trip for two to Zion National Park; a Weekend Getaway at Quinault Beach Resort and Casino in Ocean Shores including dinner for two at Emily's Fine Restaurant and massages for two in the Quinault Spa; a Weekend Getaway to the Inn at Blackberry Creek in Walla Walla, as well as many merchant gift cards.**

There are also great local prizes such as gift certificates for great dining experiences right here in Yakima such as the Greystone, Outback Steakhouse and Santiago's restaurants. You might even win tickets to a Sun Kings basketball game. (A complete list of local prizes can be found on Page 3.)

By participating in Wheel Options, you'll also be doing your part to clean up our air, unclog our roads and save yourself some cash.

You can enter online by going to www.WheelOptions.org or paper entry forms will be available from your company's Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC). Return your paper entry form to either your ETC or YVCOG, or complete the online form by October 26th.

And once again, don't forget the **Guaranteed Ride Home program** that ensures a free ride home for those that participate in alternative modes of commuting and find themselves in the position of needing an emergency ride home.

For additional information contact your ETC or Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator at 574-1550 or by email at curtinb@yvco.org.

Your YVCOG Staff:

J. Page Scott, Executive Director
Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator
Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner
Drew Miller, Senior Transportation Planner
Saadia Hassan, Planner
Richard Spada, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator
Gene E. Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator
Jim Dixon, Housing Rehab Building Inspector
Tamara Hayward, Housing Rehab Office Specialist
Nancy Soules, Administrative Finance Officer
Judy Price, Office Specialist



wheel Options

your trip, your way.
It's wheel rewarding!

Local Prizes!!!

Greystone Restaurant Gift Certificate

Outback Steakhouse Gift Certificate

Santiago's Restaurant Gift Certificate

Lowe's Home Improvement Gift Certificate

Yakima Sunkings Basketball Tickets

Inklings Bookstore Gift Certificates (10)

Movie Bucks (10)



ENTER ONLINE AT:

WWW.WHEELOPTIONS.ORG

Exercise your options and win a 7 day Trip for Two to Utah's Majestic Zion National Park! From October 8th to the 19th say goodbye to your solo commute and carpool, vanpool, ride the bus, bike or walk to work during Wheel Options! You may even be able to compress your work schedule or work from home. Pick the choice that's best for you and discover a more relaxed commute. Imagine a week of wandering amid towering canyon walls, enjoying beautiful blue skies and relaxing in the rustic elegance of Zion Park National Lodge. That's one of the great prizes you can win for participating just twice during the two week event. For more information contact your Employee Transportation Coordinator or contact Brian Curtin, YVCOG CTR program coordinator-Phone 574-1550 or email at: curtinb@yvcog.org.

Toppenish Housing Rehabilitation Program Advances

By Gene Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator



The Toppenish City Council approved the 2007 Toppenish Housing Rehabilitation Program (THRP) Policy Plan on August 27, 2007. The Plan, developed by the YVCOG and the City's CDBG Policy and Grievance Committee, provides detailed policies and procedures governing the Program's implementation.

Similar to the 2005 THRP Policy Plan, the 2007 Plan offers Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation and Weatherization loans to qualified Toppenish residents. Loans are separated into two basic categories: Standard Loans (defined as Applicants ages 61 and under); and Elderly Loans (Applicants ages 62 or over). Standard loans require monthly payments ranging from \$40.00 to \$75.00, depending on Participant income, and require repayment of only 60% of the portion of the project funded by CDBG funds. Elderly loans require monthly payments ranging from \$25.00 to \$60.00, depending on Participant income, and require repayment of only 50% of the portion of the project funded by CDBG funds. Both loan types are zero interest.

The YVCOG housing staff has been actively performing Program activities since June. Current activities include conducting prequalification interviews, conducting formal application interviews, verifying income, asset and legal information generated from Program applications, ordering title reports and addressing title-related issues; performing and evaluating lead-based paint assessments, and creating lead, rehabilitation and weatherization scopes of work and cost estimates.

The Program is targeting completing a minimum 15 to 20 housing rehabilitation projects within the City's corporate limits. The Toppenish Housing Rehabilitation Program is substantially funded by a Community Development Block Grant from the Washington State Office of Community Development, with the remaining funding provided by the City of Toppenish.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Gene Weinmann, YVCOG Housing Rehab Coordinator at (509) 574-1550.

TITLE VI Notice to the Public

YVCOG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, see <http://www.yvcog.org/title6.pdf> or call (509) 574-1550.

Free Spyware for your Home Computer

By Richard Spada, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator

Over the last few months, I have written articles on how to maintain your computer and offering advice on free anti-virus software. This month I am going to discuss free anti-spyware. **Spyware** is computer software that is installed surreptitiously on a personal computer to intercept or take partial control over the user's interaction with the computer, without the user's informal consent. They are different than viruses and worms in that they usually do not self replicate.

The following are free anti-spyware software that I personally know to be safe to install on your computer at home.

- AVG Anti-Spyware Free Edition
- Lavasoft Ad-Aware 2007 Free
- Safer Networking Spybot Search & Destroy
- Javacool Software SpywareBlaster
- Microsoft Windows Defender – Free for Windows XP users
- Spy Audit from Webroot
- Spyware Scan from Aluria Software

These are all known to be safe to download onto your computer. Do not download any other anti-spyware until you find out if it is safe. Many are hazardous to your computer. If you have any questions feel free to contact me here at the YVCOG. Be careful, think before you act and keep those computers clean and healthy.

Meeting Highlights....September 17

MPO/RTPO Executive Committee

- Announcement of National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) 2007 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award to the YVCOG for Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan.
- Approved 2008-2011 MTIP/RTIP Determination of Air Quality Conformity by resolution 2007-7 .
- Approved 2008-2011 MTIP/RTIP Findings, by resolution 2007-8.
- Announcement of CMAQ funding for City of Selah's road and alley improvement projects for \$377,463.
- Approved submittal of CTR Regional Plan to the State CTR Board by October 1.

YVCOG Executive Committee

- Approved hiring half-time, 12-month position to assist YVCOG finance office.
- Approved August budget report with revenue balance of \$30,714.89.
- Approval to forward 2008 YVCOG Preliminary Budget, to YVCOG General Membership for review by city councils.
- Approved September vouchers for \$78,109.82



YVCOG OCTOBER MEETINGS...

MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee

Thursday, October 11, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.
311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
(The 300 Building)
Yakima, WA

YVCOG Executive Committee & MPO/RTPO Executive Committee & Policy Board

Monday, October 15, 2007 - 1:30 p.m.
311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
(The 300 Building)
Yakima, WA

YVCOG General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 17, 2007 - 6:30 p.m.
Toppenish, WA
(Location to be announced)