



**MEMBER JURISDICTIONS:**

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

**YVCOG EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE:**

- John P. Hodkinson, Jr., Chair  
*Regional Planning Commission*
- James A. Restucci, Vice Chair  
*Sunnyside City Council*
- Mike Leita  
*Yakima County Commission*
- Norm Johnson  
*Yakima City Council*
- Dan Olson  
*Union Gap City Council*
- Loren Belton  
*Mayor, Toppenish*
- Velva Herrera  
*Mayor, Mabton*



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**Naches Depot Opens!!!**

*By Drew Miller, Senior Planner*

On June 20th, the Town of Naches officially celebrated the grand opening of the Naches Depot and Trail Project. The project restored the original historic Naches Depot train station, added new separate restroom facilities, lighting, parking, landscaping, and began the initial phase of a larger trail project. The trail will eventually connect with Yakima County's and the Yakima Greenway Foundation's efforts to expand the Greenway Trail west on the deactivated Naches Rail Line and connect the Town of Naches to the cities of Yakima and Union Gap.

The newly restored Naches Depot will now function as the eastern portal for both the Chinook Pass and White Pass Scenic Byways. YVCOG's involvement in the project included facilitating the selection process that resulted in the depot project receiving federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) Enhancement funds in 2005 and 2007 totaling \$320,000.



**YVCOG Summer Office Hours**

**M-Th 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Friday 8 a.m. – noon**

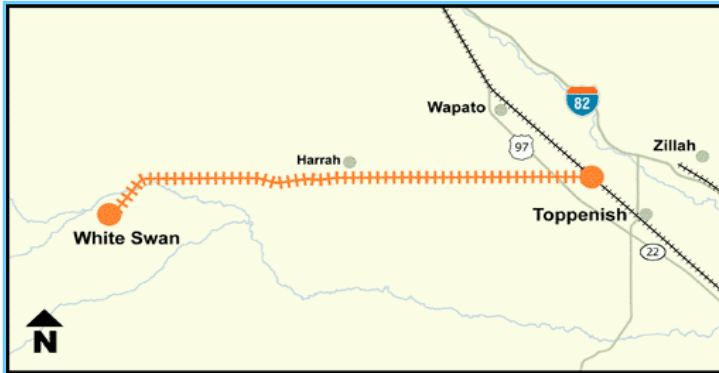


Starting July 11, the YVCOG office will be closed on Friday afternoons. YVCOG staff will generally be available Mondays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but on Fridays, the office will be closing at noon. Individual YVCOG staff may be available outside of these office hours as needed, but as a general rule, the office will be closed outside of these times.

If you have any concerns about the YVCOG office hours or staff availability, please contact Page Scott, Executive Director at (509) 574-1550 or [scott@yvcog.org](mailto:scott@yvcog.org). As always, we welcome your feedback.

# Railroad Line Upgrade To Start Soon

By Saadia Hassan, Planner



The Yakima County owned White Swan/Toppenish-Yakama Sawmill Railroad Line Traffic Upgrade Project is scheduled to start this summer. This project will upgrade the existing Toppenish Simcoe & Western Rail line for increased traffic from different shippers, increase freight rail service safety, and provide access to low cost rail freight transportation for the Yakama Nation's sawmills, which supports 250 local jobs.

In 1994, the spur line was purchased by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the title was transferred to the Yakima Board of County Commissioners. WSDOT helped to construct rail sidings on the line in 2002. Since 1994, a steadily rising number of railcars have been using the Columbia Basin Railroad line, which has needed an upgrade to handle the increased shipping traffic. The rail line handles traffic from the Yakama Nation's two sawmills.

In 2005, Yakima County and WSDOT signed a contract to upgrade the 21-mile long Toppenish Simcoe and Western Rail Line between Wesley Junction (MP 0.00) and Town of Harrah (MP 9.6). In 2006, WSDOT and the County executed amendments to the contract to allow a private operator to provide labor and equipment at no cost, which in turn would have allowed the entire line to be upgraded rather than half of it. However, as the Rail and the County were unable to reach an agreement for the donation, the County resolved to re-examine the scope to reflect the most appropriate use of the funds for the current and future shippers on this line in 2007.

WSDOT met with Yakima County in January 2008 and decided to revert back to the original 2005 grant agreement; which grant funds provided an upgrade to a portion of the Toppenish Simcoe and Western Rail Line between Wesley Junction (MP 0.00) and Town of Harrah (MP 9.6). The work includes the purchase of materials and construction.

WSDOT and Yakima County signed the grant agreement amendment in March 2008. Environmental permitting is completed for the project and construction is anticipated to start by July 2008. Project completion is scheduled for June 2009.

For more information and updates of the project, please refer to the WSDOT project website at [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Rail/CBRR\\_YakamaSawmill](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Rail/CBRR_YakamaSawmill).



## July Meetings...

### MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee

Thursday, July 10, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.  
The 300 Building  
311 North 4th Street, Suite 202  
Yakima, WA

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

Monday, July 21, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.  
The 300 Building  
311 North 4th Street, Suite 202  
Yakima, WA



Photo pictured from left to right: Union Gap Mayor Jim Lemon; Councilmember Glenn Bateman, Rep. Mary Skinner; Councilmember Dave Matson; Ryan Rodrick, staff for Congressman Doc Hastings; Sen. Curtis King; and Councilmember Dan Olson.

## Valley Mall Boulevard Phase III Groundbreaking Ceremony

By Page Scott, Executive Director

Work has begun on an important regional transportation link between I-82 and the Yakima Regional Airport. A multitude of partners, decades of planning, years of negotiations and design, and the tireless efforts of elected officials and community leaders have finally culminated in the construction of Valley Mall Boulevard extension from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to Washington Avenue just east of McAllister Field. A groundbreaking ceremony, hosted by Union Gap Mayor Jim Lemon, was held on June 17th and attended by many of the Yakima Valley's leaders who had had a hand in seeing this project through to fruition.

The project includes nearly 1.5 miles of new four-lane roadway, 2 bridges over Wide Hollow Creek, water and sewer line extensions and general system improvements that will benefit businesses, residents and visitors to our region. Congratulations and many thanks to all who have helped bring this project to construction.



## Free Photo Editing Software For Windows

By Rick Spada, GIS Analyst



Instead of spending your hard earned cash or limited public funds on expensive photo editing software, try these free ones out first. They might just do the trick.

**GIMP for Windows**, the "free Photoshop," has an interface and features similar to Photoshop. It is volunteer-developed beta software so stability and frequency of updates could be an issue. However, most users do not have significant problems with its use. [www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org)

**Serif PhotoPlus** - For a long time, Serif has given away previous versions of their software to entice users to purchase the current version. Currently you can download a completely free, fully-functional version of PhotoPlus 6. PhotoPlus 6 features an export optimizer, editable text, image slicing and image maps, selection tools, smart shapes, third-party plug-in support, red-eye removal tool, and photo enhancement tools. PhotoPlus 6 works on Windows 95, 98, 98 SE, 2000, NT4, and XP. [www.freeserifsoftware.com](http://www.freeserifsoftware.com)

**Paint.NET** is a free image and photo manipulation software for Windows 2000, XP, Vista, or Server 2003. Development started at Washington State University with additional help from Microsoft, and continues to be updated and maintained by some of the alumni that originally worked on it. It features layers, painting and drawing tools, special effects, unlimited undo history, and levels adjustments. Both the software and the source code are available for free.

**Pixia** is the English version of a popular free painting and retouching software that originated in Japan. It features custom brush tips, multiple layers, masking, vector- and bitmap-based drawing tools, color, tone, and lighting adjustments, and multiple undo/redo. Like many freeware editors, there is no support for saving GIF format. Pixia is also available for many other languages. It works with Windows 95, 98, Me, NT4, 2000, and XP.



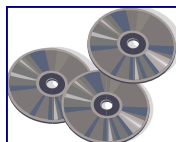
**VCW VicMan's Photo Editor** - This award-winning graphic editor offers a variety of painting and editing tools. Features include: a text tool, gradients, selections by color or region, color replacement, editing in any scale, special effects and so on.



**PhotoFiltre** - This program offers a simple, but elegant user interface and a lot of one-click image adjustments, filters, and effects. There is a built in image explorer panel for visually navigating your file system, basic drawing, painting, retouching and selection tools, and batch processing capabilities. It is free for private, non commercial or educational use and for non-profit organizations.

**Ultimate Paint** is available in both shareware and freeware versions for image creation, viewing, and manipulation. It has been designed to be fast and compact. If you're familiar with the old Deluxe Paint program from Electronic Arts, Ultimate Paint is said to be very similar. The freeware version is an older release of the full-featured shareware product.

**ImageForge** is a freeware image editor with painting and editing tools. It allows you to import images from scanners and digital cameras, apply special effects filters, and create photo albums and slideshows. Although this is a teaser program for the shareware ImageForge PRO, it's probably a few steps above Microsoft Paint.



## Washington Trivia Corner!!!

These are just some quirky fun facts about Washington State. We hope you learn something new!

1. What was Ellensburg's early name?
2. What do Seattle and Rome geographically have in common?
3. In 1860, the Bureau of Indian Affairs built a boarding school for children on what reservation in Central Washington?
4. Most of Washington's wine producing areas are on the same latitude as what European wine producing areas?

Answers on Page 4

**The YVCOG office will be closed to celebrate the Fourth of July with our families.**
  
  
**Remember, our new summer hours will be in effect starting on Monday, July 7th. Have a safe and happy 4th!**

## CMAQ Project Selected For Funding

By Drew Miller, Senior Planner

The Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Executive Committee has given approval for one local transportation project to receive federal FFY 2008 Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. The City of Yakima's Coolidge Road widening and paving project, which was recommended for funding by the MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), was awarded \$389,460 in CMAQ funds based on its ability to reduce transportation related PM<sub>10</sub> emissions within the greater Yakima metropolitan area. PM<sub>10</sub> is particulate matter commonly composed of very small dust and soot particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter.



The project will reconstruct the existing 26-foot wide gravel roadway into a 28-foot wide asphalt roadway with curb, gutter and shared bike lanes. Private developers will be required to construct sidewalks on both sides of the street as development occurs. The project will pave the approximately half-mile gravel road gap that currently exists on Coolidge Road between 80<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 88<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Air quality modeling performed by YVCOG estimates that by 2012, 26 tons of PM<sub>10</sub> will be reduced annually as a result of paving Coolidge Road. The air quality benefits will only increase as the West Valley area of Yakima continues to experience fast-paced residential growth and Coolidge Road becomes a vital collector street.

If you have any questions please contact Drew Miller at 509-574-1550 or [millerd@yvco.org](mailto:millerd@yvco.org)



## Union Gap's Housing Program Progresses

By Gene Weinmann, Housing Coordinator

The City of Union Gap's 2007 Housing Rehabilitation Program has been extremely successful to date, having approved and awarded 18 projects (8 rehabilitation, 8 weatherization and 2 lead hazard) to contractors and having completed 11 of the projects (5 rehabilitation, 5 weatherization and 1 lead hazard) to date.

The 2007 Program offers Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation, Lead Hazard and Weatherization loans to qualified Union Gap residents. Loans are separated into two basic categories, Standard and Elderly. Standard loans require monthly payments ranging from \$40.00 to \$75.00 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 and require repayment of only 50% of the portion of the project funded by CDBG funds. Both loan types are 0% interest.



The 2007 Program represents the first housing partnership between the City of Union Gap and the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG). The YVCOG's role is that of a project administration manager, directing all project administration and construction management elements of the Program. Funding is provided by a 2007 Community Development Block Grant from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) and by City of Union Gap funds.



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

### Your YVCOG Staff:

J. Page Scott, Executive Director  
Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator  
Vacant, 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, Senior Accountant  
Judy Price, Office Specialist  
Sarah Hyndman, Office Technician



### 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.

This newsletter is a monthly publication of YVCOG. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to be added to the mailing list, please call (509) 574-1550 or email Sarah at [hyndmans@yvcog.org](mailto:hyndmans@yvcog.org).



## Free...What's not to like!

By Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator

Ahh, those crazy folks over at Yakima Transit are doing it again. As my thoughts drift towards all of the excuses I've heard for why folks don't ride the bus, today I can counter all of those excuses with one simple response, "Ride it because it's free!!!" All summer long, every Saturday your bus trip (including Dial-a-Ride) will be free.



What better incentive to ride the bus could you ask for?

Your first step to freedom is acquisition of a Yakima Transit Bus Book, which is currently effective from June 9 through September 2 and available on all Yakima Transit buses, at the Transit Center on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Walnut and Yakima Ave. Call Yakima Transit at 575-6175 for a copy. Within the pages of this tome, you will find every bit of information required to make your transition from your SOV (single occupancy vehicle) to SMOV (Smart Multiple Occupancy Vehicle). You'll find that there are over 800 bus stops throughout the City of Yakima, Selah and Union Gap located about every two blocks along each bus route. One way bus service is only half a buck, thirty-five cents if you're 6-17 years old and only a quarter if you are a member of the 'Greatest Generation' (62 or older), a person with disabilities, or a Medicare card holder. Little ones, 6 and under ride for free (be sure to bring an adult!) and transfers are also free. Monthly passes are even more economical, \$17 for adult, \$12 for youths and \$5 for reduced fare. You can't come close to filling your tank for the price of a monthly pass! And the good folks of Selah and Union Gap are now experiencing their new Commuter Routes that were introduced last summer.



Visit the Yakima Transit website [www.yakimatransit.org](http://www.yakimatransit.org) for additional information about all of Yakima Transit's service routes.

All of the routes are served by ADA accessible buses to accommodate passengers using mobility devices, such as wheelchairs. What more could you ask for? And if you want to ride your bike to the bus stop, all of the buses are equipped with bike racks. Your feet need never touch the ground. For those with mobility impairments, Yakima Transit provides door-to-door transportation to pre-qualified riders. This program is called Dial-A-Ride (and all rides in this program are also free on Saturdays throughout the summer) and applications for the program can be acquired by calling 575-6054.



For additional information about Yakima Transit call 575-6175, TTY 575-6008 or visit their website at [www.yakimatransit.org](http://www.yakimatransit.org).



## Washington Trivia Answers...

1. Robber's Roost, after it's first store.
2. Both are built on seven hills.
3. The Yakama Indian Reservation.
4. The Burgundy and Bordeaux provinces of France.