



Updates from the City Manager

Martin D. Casey
February 2020

General Government

- On January 28-29, Mayor Francisco Guerrero and I attended the Association of Washington Cities “City Action Days” in Olympia. The state legislature is meeting for 60 days and is expected to tackle some tough issues, including transportation infrastructure funding. We took part in work sessions on current public policy issues facing cities and the state legislature. We attended committee hearings, observed the House floor session, and met with local legislators. We also had the opportunity to network with many other city officials.
- We are pleased to announce progress in filling recent staff vacancies. In Municipal Court, we have hired Jessica Chavez and Selenia Nateras as our new Court Clerks. In Finance, Diany Montes-Althausen, has joined us as Finance Technician (Utility Billing).

Public Safety

- In December the U.S. District Court in Spokane dismissed the state Attorney General’s (AG) Crime Free Rental Housing (CFRH) lawsuit against the city. The AG initially announced plans to refile an amended complaint in federal court. However, in mid-January the AG’s office notified our attorneys that they will not refile in federal court – they plan to refile instead in Yakima County Superior Court. Our attorneys will await the AG’s state court filing to determine how to advise the city further.
- We are grateful that Sunnyside had no homicides in 2019 for the first time in several years. Even so, the police remain vigilant, as law enforcement agencies throughout the valley have been responding to an uptick in gang-related activity and graffiti in the past month.

Public Works

- Public Works has welcomed two new hires in the Sewer Division. Alejandro Almaguer joined us as a Stormwater Maintenance worker, and Jose Ruelas was hired as a Wastewater Maintenance worker.

Community Development

- The Yakima County Development Association (YCDA) is holding a business roundtable on February 13 in Sunnyside to discuss creating a food processing apprenticeship program to meet the needs of companies in the Yakima Valley. The purpose of this roundtable is to determine if an apprenticeship focused specifically on food processing is feasible and how the program should be structured.
- The Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA) has recognized the Ostrom Mushroom Farm project with the 2020 Economic Development Project of the Year – Business Retention Award. The award recognizes the work of Ostrom, YCDA, the Port, and the City to keep this business (and 200+ jobs) in Washington. The award will be presented at a ceremony in Olympia on February 5th.