

# OLD TOWN NEWS

CITY EVENTS, CITY COUNCIL, DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES,  
& MUNICIPAL CODE INFORMATION

Winter 2023/24  
VOLUME 46, ISSUE 4

UNION GAP  
1883



Por favor llame 248-0432 para obtener información en español

## OLD FASHIONED LIGHTED PARADE

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH AT 6 PM**

Join us for the Annual Old Town Lighted Christmas Parade. Grab some hot cocoa, the kiddos, bundle up and we'll see you at this popular holiday tradition.

The parade starts at 6 pm, lasting an hour. Beginning at Yakima Street and 4002 Main Street, it moves North on Main Street, concluding at Valley Mall Blvd in the Sears Parking lot. Santa joins the festivities in the parking lot, enjoying hot chocolate, cookies, music, singing, & fun with the kids.

**WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US!**



## OUTDOOR ICE RINK

**WE'VE GOT EXCITING INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH OUR  
FRIENDS AT VALLEY MALL!**

Starting November 17th, when you Shop at Valley Mall, for the FIRST TIME EVER, you'll find a Winter Wonderland Seasonal Outdoor Ice Rink located in the parking lot area between the old Bank of America and Fuji's Restaurant!

In addition, there will be live music, fire pits, and a tree farm so plan to come and make some memories in Union Gap! The rink will be open through January. Tickets will be \$11 for kids under the age of 12, and \$14 for anyone aged 13 or older.

**THANKS, VALLEY MALL, FOR ALWAYS BRINGING FRESH AND FUN  
IDEAS TO OUR COMMUNITY!**







## UNION GAP LIBRARY & COMMUNITY CENTER

The construction of the new library in town is progressing steadily. The city has been closely monitoring the progress of the construction and is pleased with the results. Construction of the library is to be finished by spring, and the grand opening will be celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.



## CHRISTMAS TREE PICKUP

During the first week of January, Basin Disposal will collect one (1) Christmas tree per residence at no additional charge to you.

Please place your tree next to your garbage container for pickup.

## YARD WASTE PICKUP

The Public Works Department will pick up your bagged yard waste, weighing less than 40 lbs until March 1st.

Please contact Public Works Administration office at 225.3524 to schedule a pick-up.

## SNOW REMOVAL

Resident cooperation is essential to the success of the snow removal operations. It is very important that vehicles are removed from City Right-of-Way when there is significant snowfall. With fewer cars on the streets, snow plows can do a more efficient job of clearing snow and ice.

**As a reminder, UG Ordinance No. 2850 states in part:** Snow and Ice Obstructions - No person shall cause snow or ice to be placed in any public street, alley, sidewalk or public way; provided, that this section shall not apply to Union Gap town employees performing the regular course of their duties. Violation of this section shall be a civil non-traffic infraction with a penalty of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).

Please go to <https://uniongapwa.gov/public-works/street/> to review the entire Ordinance No. 2850 and Public Works "Snow Removal & Ice Control Plan".

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.







## IS YOUR DOG LICENSED?

Section 6.04.110 of the Union Gap Municipal Code states the following:

All dogs three (3) months of age or older are required to be licensed under this chapter.

- a. Tags. The police department shall issue animal licenses consisting of a metal tag with a number corresponding to the number of the application to the applicant. The applicant is required to cause the tag to be attached or fixed to the animal. The tag is not transferable. The absence of the license tag on a dog's collar shall be prima facie evidence that said dog has not been legally licensed.
- b. Fees. The following fees shall be paid for licenses required under this chapter:
  1. Spayed or neutered dogs that have current vaccinations and with a veterinarian's certificate: ten dollars (\$10.00) annually.
  2. Un-spayed, unneutered, or unvaccinated dogs, or dogs not current on vaccinations: thirty dollars (\$30.00) annually.
  3. Licenses shall be valid from January 1st to the following December 31st. For other than first time owners of a specific dog, licenses purchased after April 30th of any year shall be subject to an additional fee of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for each license.

A complete copy of the municipal code can be accessed on the city website @ [www.uniongapwa.gov](http://www.uniongapwa.gov).

For further information contact the Union Gap Police Department @ **509-248-0430**

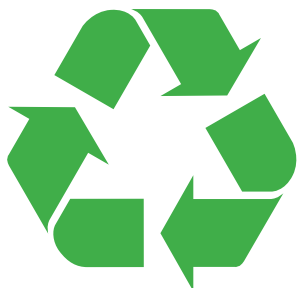
## DIGGING ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Are you planting a tree, installing a mailbox, building a deck or other projects that require digging? Before you dig, please remember to call the National "Call-Before-You-Dig" phone number (*it is required by law*). Two or three days before you plan to break ground, dial 8-1-1 or make an online request at [www.callbeforeyoudig.org](http://www.callbeforeyoudig.org). "Call-Before-You-Dig" Center will notify all affected utility operators of the need to mark any buried utility lines, in the area which you will be digging. You will see paint or flags marking the areas that utilities have been located; so you don't unintentionally dig into an underground line. Below are some color markings you may see:

WHITE	Pre-marking of the outer limits of the proposed excavation or marking the centerline and width of proposed lineal installations of buried facilities.
PINK	Temporary Survey Markings.
RED	Electric power lines, cables or conduit, and lighting cables.
YELLOW	Gas, oil, steam, petroleum, or gaseous materials.
ORANGE	Communication, alarm, signal lines, cables or conduits, and fiber.
BLUE	Potable water.
PURPLE	Slurry, irrigation and reclaimed water.
GREEN	Sewers, drainage facilities or other drain lines.

## SIGHT OBSTRUCTIONS

Public Works Crews will be addressing properties that have sight obstructions. Sight obstructions include trees, bushes, etc. which have been allowed to grow in a manner that limits or obstructs the sight distance of motorists entering or leaving intersections. *Please survey your property and clear, cut back, and clean up any sight obstructions.*



## FREE OF CHARGE!

Washington Recycles is both a hotline and an online tool that connects you, or your business, to recycling services across Washington State. This tool can help you find where, in your community, you can recycle everything from used appliances, old computers, monitors, electronics, TV's, and/or leftover paint!

Please contact [www.1-800-RECYCLE.WA.GOV](http://www.1-800-RECYCLE.WA.GOV) or call **1.800.732.9253** – this is a **FREE** service!

## BE PRO ACTIVE!

It is never too early to begin preparing for the colder seasons that are quickly approaching. It is much more pleasant to winterize your water lines, pipes, windows, your outdoor pet areas NOW than it is when temperatures are freezing. Think about how you can avoid issues you may have experienced during previous winters.



CITY OF  
**UNION GAP**  
1883

# CITY NEWS

City Council held a Budget Retreat in March of 2023 to explore cost saving measures and new revenue sources. There was projected to be a budget deficit in 2024 in the general fund. Basic city service levels could suffer reduction without implementing new revenue sources or fee increases. After discussion, Council made the difficult decision to establish new revenues and fee increases.

It was important to Council that the effect of the increases don't burden our residents any more than they have to, so various options were considered and approved that spread the costs out to different groups of people.

## HOW THIS WILL AFFECT YOUR UTILITY BILL

Beginning in January of 2024 the following utility billing changes will be implemented:

### UTILITY TAX

You will see an increase to the utility bill you receive at the beginning of February 2024. The city established a 10% utility tax on the gross revenues of water, sewer, and garbage charges. It's expected to generate additional revenue to help maintain current levels of city services.

Most of the other cities in our region have already established utility taxes for their utility customers, so Union Gap has been unique in that they have not done so in the past. Comparative tax rates were compiled for our region and the average utility tax for water is 24%, sewer is 22.6%, and garbage is at 21.2%. Union Gap decided to establish a utility tax of just 10%, because, it was important to the council to establish the minimum amount of utility tax needed. Those affected will be water, sewer, and garbage customers.

### UTILITY PENALTY FEES

The city currently bills for utilities each month but allows two months of billing to accumulate before the bill is considered delinquent. In some cases this causes hardship on utility customers who wait to pay their bill until the second month, as it is much higher. This also affects the city who has to carry that debt, as well as the property owner who is ultimately responsible for the bill.

The city compiled utility penalty fees for our region and found the average utility penalty fee to be around \$12.28. The city decided to implement a \$10 utility penalty fee for those who are late in paying their utility bill. The city is also changing utility bills being considered delinquent monthly instead of bi-monthly. This should be more efficient in billing and collecting the fees. In many instances the residents find it difficult to pay utility bills that include two months of charges rather than one month.

The current due date for utility bills are the 10th of each month and that will not change. If a utility bill is not paid by the 11th then a \$10 fee will be assessed and a late notice will be sent as a reminder to pay the bill within 10 days to avoid disconnection. Those affected by this change will be utility customers who are delinquent on their utility bill.

## FEE INCREASES

Beginning in January of 2024 the following fees will be increased:

### IMPACT/DEVELOPER FEES

The City considered the impact of development within the City and found that construction and development of dwelling units, commercial and industrial manufacturing buildings and structures, places demands on municipal government to provide new services and expand and improve public facilities. In order to provide an equitable source of funding for public facilities, it was determined to be necessary for the city to establish Impact/Developer fees. This will be a one-time cost of .65 per sq. ft. for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The fees collected will be allocated as follows:

25%	General Parks and Open Space
60%	Streets/Roads
15%	Fire

*Those affected: Developers and home builders*

### BUSINESS LICENSE FEES

The city gathered comparative business license fees for our region and found Union Gap business license fees to be lower than average. The fees were adjusted to be more consistent with the average fees gathered.

*Those affected: Business owners*

### NSF FEES

The city gathered comparative NSF fees for our region and found Union Gap fees to be lower than average. The fee was adjusted to be consistent with the average fees gathered.

*Those affected: Customers who pay from an account with non-sufficient funds.*

### PARK USE FEES

The city gathered comparative Parks fees for our region and found Union Gap fees to be lower than average. The fees were adjusted to be more consistent with the average fees gathered.

*Those affected: Residents and non-residents who reserve the parks and buildings.*





## RECOGNITION OF YEARS OF SERVICE

We would like to express our appreciation to Police Chief Greg Cobb for 25 years of service with the Union Gap Police Department. Thank you for your expertise, hard work, and service to this community.

## FOOD DRIVE

The City of Union Gap is sponsoring a FOOD DRIVE for the Catholic Charities/St. Vincent Center Food Bank. To participate, bring your canned goods and dry food products to city hall between December 4th – 20th to place under our Christmas tree. Food will be delivered before Christmas.

## CALLING ALL BUSINESS OWNERS & OPERATORS

Please join us for an informal "Meet & Greet" event. December 7, 2023 drop in between 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. – presentation at 6:30 p.m. Union Gap Council Chambers, 102 West Ahtanum – Union Gap WA 98903. Bring your business cards to enter a gift drawing. Gifts will be drawn throughout the event. The event is sponsored by the City of Union Gap. For more information contact [Teresa.Lopez@uniongapwa.gov](mailto:Teresa.Lopez@uniongapwa.gov)



## POLICE DEPARTMENT HOLIDAY ANNOUNCEMENT

Enjoy the holidays with loved ones, but the Union Gap Police Department wants to remind you to stay vigilant for safety. Each year we respond to several burglaries and car prowls directly related to the Holiday Season.

In holiday rush, secure belongings when shopping. Lock doors, hide purchases in the trunk. If adding items to your car, relocate to a different parking area to avoid theft. Thieves target parked cars with visible merchandise. For visible Christmas trees, hide gifts. Burglars may target presents under trees when residents are away.

If you'll be away for the holidays, inform us. Call for an "Extra Patrol" or report concerns to Union Gap Police at (509) 248-0430.

Happy Holidays!

## WHO TO CALL FOR ASSISTANCE?

**EMERGENCY - 24 HOURS A DAY / 7 DAYS A WEEK:** All life threatening emergencies - dial 911

**AFTER NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS, WEEK-ENDS AND HOLIDAYS:** All non-life threatening emergencies (i.e. water line breaks / sewer back-ups) - dial 509.248.0430\*

**DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS:** All issues that can wait until normal business hours - dial the appropriate number listed on the back of this newsletter.

\*After normal business hours, week-ends, and holidays the Police Department transfers their business line to SUNCOMM Communications - the 911 call center for Yakima County and dispatch for the Union Gap and Yakima Police Departments. If you do not get an answer right away, there is a good chance 911 is handling calls on their emergency lines and are unable to get to the non-emergency lines as quickly as normal.

CITY OF UNION GAP  
102 W. AHTANUM ROAD  
P.O. BOX 3008  
UNION GAP, WA  
98903-0008

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
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PERMIT #100

Postal Customer—ECRWSS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### WEBSITES

Published on a quarterly basis to  
keep citizens informed

City Business: [uniongapwa.gov](http://uniongapwa.gov)  
Union Gap Tourism: [visituniongap.com](http://visituniongap.com)  
Xpress Bill Pay: [xpressbillpay.com](http://xpressbillpay.com)

### PHONE DIRECTORY

#### 102 W. AHTANUM ROAD

City Hall	248-0432
Fire	575-6060
Park Reservations	248-0432
Treasurer / Clerk	248-0432
Utility Billing	248-0434
Newsletter	248-9202

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Building / Planning	575-3638
Code Enforcement	248-0430
Public Works	225-3524

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Police	248-0430
Crime Prevention	457-5927
Animal Control	248-0430

#### 1000 AHTANUM ROAD

Senior Citizen Center	248-2668
Activities/Barn Rentals	248-0432

#### TOURISM & TRANSIT

Tourism Promoter	575-8770
Union Gap Transit	574-8000
UG Transit TTY	574-8000

### MAYOR & COUNCIL

#### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Position #1  
**John Hodgkinson** ~ 424-0993

Position #2  
**Greg Sewell** ~ 952-9733

Position #3  
**Roger Wentz** ~ 930-7023

Position #4  
**Jack Galloway** ~ 452-2966

Position #5  
**David Hansen** ~ 388-8898

Position #6  
**Julie Schilling** ~ 453-2446 Ext. 3

Position #7  
**Sandy Dailey** ~ 248-6351

#### MAYOR & DEPUTY MAYOR

Mayor  
**John Hodgkinson** ~ 424-0993

Deputy Mayor  
**Roger Wentz** ~ 930-7023

### CITY STAFF

*City Manager*  
**Sharon Bounds**  
494-6562

*Director of Public Works &  
Community Development*  
**Dennis Henne**  
225-3524

*Director of Finance &  
Administration*  
**Karen Clifton**  
248-0432

*Police Chief*  
**Greg Cobb**  
248-0430

*City Attorney*  
**Jessica Foltz**