

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON TO LAYOFF WORKERS



Layoffs are coming to the state of Washington, in the city of Yakima. Under a new city plan that has been release by the budget office, the numbers show that in order for things to be fiscally sound some of the cities workers are just going to have to go. What is amazing is that unlike other acts of bureaucracy, where things can take months or even years to get done, this happened with an amazing burst of speed. The approval came so quickly that that members of the city council did not have a chance to object to the new budget or discuss alternate plans of action. The off thing is that the positions are not really about job loss but about job changes. The city made a decision last month that they wanted to fill six of the police vacancies that had been left open. In order to hire on those officers without tanking the budget some changes had to be made. The city Manager, Don Cooper, put together a plan to pay for these new jobs, but it has to be done at the expense of existing workers. The plans will layoff or demote a number of employees as well as leaving a number of other vacancies unfilled. The changes are designed not only to make up all of the money used for the new hires, but for the one million dollar shortfall that already existed in the budget for the city for the coming year. The loss of money comes from a change in the states policy. Previously the town was receiving funds from state-collected liquor taxes as well as from one other program that amounted to the million lost. The state needs the money in order to balance its own budget. The changes only came after state Governor Chris Gregoire released the states budget plan on Friday. There is, of course, no way to know if the states budget will pass, but the city is planning for the worst. The Governor's proposal is currently up for debate in the state legislature. In addition a liquor privatization measure, named Initiative 1183, may also help to lessen some of the cuts revenue drain for cities such as Yakima. Even if the legislature finds other ways to save the needed funds it is necessary to prepare for some cuts to be made. The budget for the state of Washington is no less bleak than that of many other states. The likelihood of the shortfall being made up by the federal government is also extremely unlikely, as they have cut aid to the states. The city deems the extra police presence as needed, because the city has a problem with gangs and other forms of crime. Unless things change in the next year or so cities like Yakima are going to have to find new ways to fund their government offices, since the idea of laying people off to save money only works for so long. After that you simply have no one to let go. Other options for the chopping services provided by parks and recreation are also available in this case.