

YAKIMA COUNTY COURTS

Law & Justice Sales Tax Report

Updated May 29, 2009

Dear Voters and Taxpayers of Yakima County:

Collection of revenue from the 3/10ths of 1% Sales Tax Initiative that you approved in November 2004 began in June of 2005. Thanks to your support, the Courts have been busy implementing the improvements promised you when we asked for the Initiative.

Following is a brief description of improved court services provided to the citizens of Yakima County using the 3/10ths Tax Initiative funding:

DISTRICT COURT:



1313 West Wine Country Road, Grandview, WA opened March 1, 2006

The re-establishment of the Lower Valley District Court was a major component of the 3/10ths sales tax initiative. District Court's average predicted allocation of \$450,781 per year is being used for the opening and operation of the Lower Valley District Court in Grandview. Lower Valley District Court is currently operating five days a week and includes all District Court and Grandview Municipal Court matters. Over 5,000 Grandview Municipal and Yakima County District Court hearings per year are held in Grandview.

District Court's share of 3/10ths revenue pays for the following improvements in court services for the public:

- Lease of the Grandview facility which provides a full service courtroom, holding cell, jury room, security station, office space for court staff, Prosecutor's Office, Public Defense and both Adult and Juvenile Probation.
- Salaries and benefits for 5.5 District Court employees.
- Technology, which allows a judge in Yakima to hear a case in Grandview through video conferencing.
- Funding for staff and technology for the Imaging and E-ticketing Projects, both of which streamline and reduce overall operating costs.
- Office supplies and routine operating expenses for the Lower Valley Court.

SUPERIOR COURT:



The major goals for 3/10ths funding in the Superior Court are to mitigate congested court dockets and enhance legal services to families and children. The Superior Court average predicted allocation of \$313,564 per year is being used to fund part of a Court Commissioner's salary, 3 clerk positions, 2 Family Court positions and subsidizes increased operating expenses. The added positions and operational dollars assisted the Court in reducing the criminal case "backlog" of over 1,700 cases in 2008 to 921 by June of 2009. The funding has allowed the Court to move cases in a more efficient and effective manner and hold both the system and the criminal defendant more accountable to the community. The funding has increased services to Family Court by expanding services and creating more Court time to resolve these complicated family matters.

Juvenile Court:



1728 Jerome Avenue, Yakima, WA



Juvenile Detention Pod

The major initiative for 3/10ths funding in Juvenile Court was to open more beds at the Juvenile Detention Facility. The Juvenile Court average predicted allocation of \$701,330 per year is being used to increase capacity from 28 beds to 56 beds. Dollars from the 3/10ths tax revenue are paying for 7 detention officers, 2 detention supervisors, 2 support staff, and a .5 case manager. In addition, the tax initiative revenue is subsidizing increased costs for medical services and mental health services for detention youth. Opening more beds at juvenile detention has allowed us to increase accountability and protection for the community.