



THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2025 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*The Magic
Of Rotary*

FIRE CHIEFS AARON MARKHAM, JIM LANGE, & NATHAN CRAIG

YAKIMA FIRE SERVICE: TRENDS & CHALLENGES



Chief Aaron Markham is the fire chief of the Yakima Fire Department. He is a lifetime resident of the Yakima Valley, having only lived outside of the area in Seattle while on active duty in the United States Coast Guard. He has over 33 years of fire service experience. Chief Markham's fire service career began with the City of Sunnyside Fire Department. He graduated from Eastern Oregon University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Administration and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. When not breathing smoke, his favorite hobbies are camping and fishing.



Jim Lange is the fire chief for the Selah Fire Department, which includes the City of Selah and Yakima County Fire Protection District #2. Jim is a graduate of West Valley High School, has a degree in Fire Science and is an alumnus of the National Fire Academy Managing Officer Program in Emmetsburg, Maryland. Chief Lange started his career in the fire service as a volunteer firefighter with West Valley Fire in 2005 and was hired as a full-time Training Officer in 2010. In March of 2015, he was hired as Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal with the Selah Fire Department where his duties included fire code enforcement, fire investigation and public education.

In April of 2021, he was hired as the department's Fire Chief. When not chasing smoke, he's hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling or enjoying time with his wife and children.



Chief Nathan Craig is a lifelong resident of West Valley where he currently resides with his wife raising two children, cattle, and hay on their mini ranch. He is a graduate of West Valley High School, holds a degree in Fire Science from Yakima Valley College and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. He began his career as a volunteer firefighter in 1994 earning his Washington State EMT license in 1996. In 2001, he joined the formal leadership ranks of the West Valley Fire Department serving as a volunteer Lieutenant at station one. In 2003 Chief Craig was hired full-time by the District as Captain of the Training Division. In 2008 he was promoted to Deputy Fire Chief in charge of operations and in October of 2016 was selected as Fire Chief. Chief Craig has served on the Board of the Yakima County Fire Chiefs Association continuously since 2013 including the last four years as President. In his spare time, he is an avid fisherman chasing the bite in freshwater, saltwater and for shellfish from Puget Sound to the mouth of the Columbia River and everywhere in-between.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Jeff Swan, Bob Price
Inspiration – Clark Permann
Sergeant-at-Arms – Kathy Miller Parrish
Program – Bob Udell
Attendance – Jake Hambly

FUTURE PROGRAMS

January 30th – Brett Lovins, Sobriety & The Workplace
February 6th – David Kearby, St. Andrews Golf Tournament for Rotarians
February 13th – Shaquem Griffin, Black History Month
February 20th – Andi Hochleitner & Dr. Foti Panagakos, Classification Talks

COMMITTEE MEETING NOTICE

This is a notice that there will be a meeting of the Mentorship/Retention Committee before Rotary this Thursday, January 23rd before Rotary at 11:30am.

If you are on the committee, please mark your calendar and plan to attend.



ROTARY BRIDGE KICKOFF

Sunday, January 26th

2pm to 4pm

Robertson Room at the Capitol Theatre
Open to all skill levels from first time beginner to advanced.

Guests & spouses are invited to participate.



MLK JR PEACE WALK - MONDAY, JANUARY 20TH

Meet at N 5th Avenue and MLK Jr. Blvd at 11:30am

Dress warmly and wear your Rotary swag.



REVIEW

We had the honor of having Dr. Melissa Hill from Heritage University as our program speaker this week to talk about higher education in our Valley, workforce needs in our state, attendance trends, and why men are not going to college. Questions for us were part of the process. She began by asking what titles in our lives we are most proud of. For her it was being a mother and the ability to serve as a provost. If money, time and intellectual ability were not a factor, what professional position, if any would you have chosen differently. With a list compiled by the Washington Roundtable of 1.5 million jobs in the fields of education, advanced computing, construction, healthcare, green technology, and business management, would that position fall within one of the industries we are going to need in the future. In the state of Washington alone, 75% of those jobs will require post-secondary education. The number of people pursuing post-secondary education is not keeping up with what is needed. There is an enrollment cliff of 100,000 fewer students. In the fall of 2022, 2-year colleges saw a slight increase in enrollment; 4-year colleges have seen a 6% decrease in enrollment.

There is a little bit of an attack on higher education. One of the greatest threats to people not attending college is the statement we often here of "college is not for everyone." There is a big difference between that and "college is not for me." If you look at history, you have to look at who was excluded. Women had to fight to get their seat in the classroom; education became the accepted course of study. Today K-12 is dominated by women. At the same time, the number of men going to college has declined. In K-12 young girls are outperforming boys in general. Why is that? Is it our structure that we need to look at or is it that girls can sit pretty and listen. There also exists a mindset for some men that they don't need a college degree to get the job they need. That may be true, but it can change later in life. The decrease in men attending college goes through all demographics. Men are the minority with 60% of college students being women. One of the things that higher education needs to ask is what can be done. One solution is making sure spaces are provided where men have a voice and feel comfortable.

What are the greatest challenges that we will face in the future? We only need to look at the fires we are seeing, oceans that are full of garbage, violence and unrest, and AI. What are colleges doing to meet those needs? Community colleges are offering more degrees, including applied bachelors, we are seeing increased technical degree programs through vocational training, students can participate in college in the high school, and enhanced distance learning. We are lucky in the Yakima Valley. We have the ability in our own community to fulfill the needs of the workforce. We have YVC, Perry Technical Institute, Heritage University, and PNWU. Students don't have to leave their families to go to college. Partnerships are important as well. Heritage has fabulous partnerships with WSU, PNWU and Seattle University. We ended with a few more questions. Who is the person or persons you love the most; ask yourself would you like anyone to say to them, college isn't for everyone - it might not be for you. Would you want them excluded? When we think collectively, all of us care, have people we love, and all want to tackle the challenges. What Rotary is doing with the Mollie Davis Scholarship (and our own Academic & Vocational Scholarships) is exactly what our community needs.

A special thank you to our greeters Rebecca Thornton and Ken Smith; Rick Pinnell for his inspirational message about education and introducing Dr. Hill; and Matt Martinus for raising funds for California fire relief. Announcements included the presentation of a blue badge to Lisa Sargent, and reminders about our Second Chance Social, Rotary Bridge, and community events for the MLK Jr. holiday weekend.





THANK YOU TO OUR ROTARY AUCTION SPONSORS!

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Morgan Stanley



Quinn & Aaron Dalan



Bronze

