

City Council Retrospective

Former City Councilmember **Francis Benjamin** called it a privilege to have been entrusted with the responsibility of city council and to set the vision for Pullman's future. He was first appointed to city council in 2003 and then elected to three four-year terms. He is succeeded by **Ann Parks** who won the seat in the November general election.



Francis Benjamin

How did you decide to be part of local government? Prior to choosing to serve our community on city council, my family experienced some significant health issues. After we worked through them, my wife **Heidi** and I realized that we may not always have our health and that we should not put off the things which we wanted to accomplish. Heidi went back to school, got her masters, and become a counselor. For me, I wanted to invest in the Pullman community which had been an incredible blessing to my family. My vision has been to give back to our community and serve to make Pullman better. I got involved in service to the Pullman community and on city committees and this led to service on Pullman's city council.

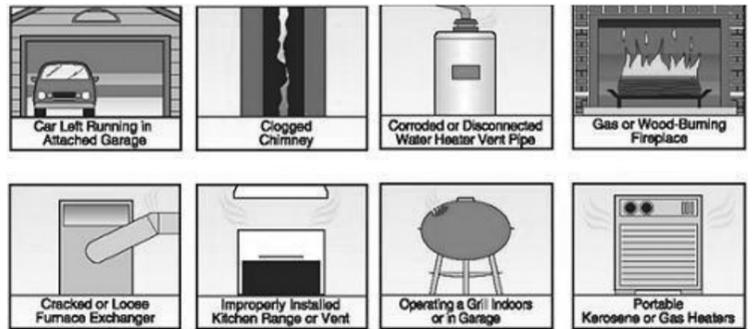
Key issues you remember the council considering The greatest challenge the city council has faced while I have been on council has been how to provide a responsible level of service in the midst of reduced budgets resulting from our country's greatest recession. Key issues have focused on managing Pullman's growth in new businesses and housing, increased transportation infrastructure needs, increased congestion, legalized marijuana, increased water quality standards, expanding regional collaborations, and reduced state shared revenues.

A contribution of which you are particularly proud? During my time on city council, I have worked to grow

collaborations and to advance economic development. We are much more successful when we have others working with us. My work has been growing collaborations within Pullman, within our region, and as president of the Association of Washington Cities across our state.

Vision for Pullman? My vision has been to listen to and represent all of Pullman, to promote improved quality of life, to maintain sustainable responsible budgets, to mentor our youth and future leaders, and to advance Pullman for all. I haven't restricted my focus to only a single issue because in doing so one will often overlook the best solution in favor of supporting one's issue. I want my decisions to stand the test of time and for them to still be the right decisions five, ten and twenty-five years from now.

Post-council plans? My vision for Pullman hasn't changed. I desire to stay engaged and will continue to invest in Pullman. I am looking forward to new opportunities to engage our community members and to continue to make a difference.



January deadliest month for CO poisoning

The first month of the year is the worst for carbon monoxide poisoning. Pullman Fire Department reminds you that carbon monoxide, also known as CO, is called the "Invisible Killer" because it's a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. More than 150 people in the United States die every year from accidental non-fire related CO poisoning associated with consumer products. Fatalities are highest among men and senior citizens: Men because they are engaged in more high-risk behaviors such as working with fuel-burning tools or appliances and seniors because they are likely to mistake the symptoms of CO poisoning (headaches, nausea, dizziness or confusion) for the flu or fatigue.

It should come as no surprise that CO deaths are the highest in winter (December is the second highest month). Cold weather increases the use of gas-powered furnaces as well as the use of risky alternative heating and power sources (portable generators, charcoal briquettes, propane stoves or grills) during power outages. With these sobering facts Pullman Fire Department offers these safety tips to prevent CO poisoning:

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil or coal-burning appliance inspected and serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Install battery-operated CO detectors on every level of your home.
- Don't use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside the home, basement or garage or outside the home near a window.
- Don't burn anything in an unvented stove or fireplace.
- Don't let a vehicle idle inside a garage attached to a house, even if the garage door is left open.
- Don't heat a house with a gas oven.

If a CO detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911 from outside. Seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and if you or someone in your household is feeling dizzy, light-headed or nauseated.

ACTIVE ADULTS

New Member Potluck

All seniors are welcome as we recognize those who became center members during 2015. The Senior Association will be providing the entrée and members can sign up to bring other items. The new members do not need to bring food, just your smile. Home pickup begins at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 13. The event runs from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sign up at the Senior Center by Jan. 8. Free.

WSU Museum of Art

Join us as we check out our own local art museum on the WSU campus. After we tour the museum, we can view a new, featured exhibit: "The Greg Kucera and Larry Yocom Collection" which has been assembled collaboratively over a 30-year span. Lunch afterwards will be at Banyans. Home pickup begins at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 20. We leave city hall at 10 a.m. and return about 2 p.m. Register by Jan. 8. *Fee: \$5. Cost of the meal is not included.

Volunteer Recognition Party

Have you been volunteering at the Pullman Senior Center? You are cordially invited to attend the annual volunteer recognition party

at the Senior Center in city hall. We want to recognize you and your service. Enjoy a delicious meal catered by Wayback Café as a big thank you for everyone who has helped. This is for regular volunteers who have documented 20 hours or more of volunteer service during the past year. Home pickup will be available. The event runs from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 21. Sign up at the Center by Jan. 15. Fee: free for members/\$6 for spouses and friends

Lunch with the Palouse Seniors

After having so much fun visiting the Colfax seniors, we're going to make the rounds to visit a few others. Home pickup begins at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 27. We leave city hall at 11 a.m. and return about 2 p.m. Sign up at the Center by Jan. 25. Free.

INB Theater presents 'The Book of Mormon'

This Broadway blockbuster and winner of nine Tony Awards is hailed as the best musical of the century. The musical comedy follows the misadventures of a mismatched pair of missionaries, sent halfway across the world to spread the Good Word. This show contains

explicit language. Home pickup begins at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 31. We leave city hall at 8:30 a.m. and return about 5:30 p.m. We'll have brunch before the show at The Yards. Register by Jan 8. *Fee: \$85, which includes admission, escort and transportation. The cost of the meal is not included.

AARP Tax-Aide

Back again this year, Tax-Aide helps seniors to prepare their income tax returns and get the deductions and credits they deserve. For more information contact **Randy Baukol** at 208-882-5406. It will be held at the Senior Center from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. every Thursday approximately from Feb. 4 to Apr. 14. Services are free and are on a first come, first served basis.



*All registrants who live outside Pullman city limits will be charged an additional \$2.

NOTE: Many of these trips are listed in the 2016 Winter/Spring Parks & Recreation brochure and may fill up due to pre-registration. Call for info at 338-3307 or 338-3227. Also, the Center will be closed Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 & 18 for holidays.

