

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for Feb. 15

Information about COVID-19 is evolving rapidly, and our important work as a City is continuing. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information on both COVID and employee news. We will provide this update, as needed, to communicate what you need to know, while we work to reduce the spread of this disease in our community and continue to provide critical public services.

A Message from Mayor Woodward

Peer recognition is one of the most important ways you can show that you value a colleague and teammate. This group of Employee of the Quarter nominees for the fourth quarter has earned our appreciation and thank you for the trust, integrity, quality, teamwork, accountability, openness, innovation, diversity, and sense of community they have demonstrated.

They have worked through some pretty challenging circumstances with a can-do attitude and focused determination to deliver the outcomes those they are serving expect.

The nominees are:

- **Donald Coley** in Accounting, who through a significant amount of transition has maintained an outstanding attitude and willingness to pick up and help where there are gaps.
- The **Human Resources COVID Response Team**, which is the first point of contact for employees who need assistance and instruction on what they need to do when they, a family members, or co-workers is either exposed or has tested positive with COVID.
- **Annica Eagle** in the Office of Neighborhood Services, is the point of contact for traffic calming and mobile speed trailer applications and fields traffic-related questions from the community.
- **Clint Olson** in the Information Technology Systems Department was nominated by the Accounting Department for his help implementing the new fixed asset system, which kicked off at the beginning of the pandemic.
- **Mike Simmons** in the Wastewater Department helps train new employees and is always willing to share his experience.
- Spokane Police Officer **Ryan Snider** of the Technical Assistance Response Unit, Police Peer Assistance Team, and the Hostage Negotiations Team was nominated for his interactions with the community, his ongoing education and certification, and his work with suicide prevention.
- The **Water Emergency Response Crews** for their work keeping the City's infrastructure running through the impact of the harsh winter elements.

Look for a video later in the week announcing the Employee of the Fourth Quarter!

UPDATE: WA Cares Fund

As you know, taxation of employees in Washington State for the new WA Cares Fund (Long-Term Care Tax) was to begin January 2022 for those employees who had not purchased a private policy by the deadline.

On January 27, 2022, Governor Jay Inslee signed two bills passed by the Legislature making key improvements to WA Cares Fund. These reforms will address coverage gaps and delay program implementation by 18 months. Changes include the following:

- Workers near retirement (born before 1968) will be able to qualify for partial benefits on a pro-rated basis.
- Workers who live out-of-state and work in Washington, military spouses, workers on non-immigrant visas and certain veterans with disabilities will be able to opt out of the program if they choose.
- **Workers will begin contributing to the fund in July 2023**

There will likely be additional modifications to the bill. We will keep you updated as the changes are made.

Spokane COVID-19 Testing Sites

Drive-up and walk-up [COVID-19 testing sites](#) are open to the community. These testing sites offer free testing and are open to anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or has recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Spokane Falls Community College

3410 W. Whistalks Way, Spokane, WA 99224

Hours: Mon, Tue, Thur, & Fri, 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

Spokane County Fair and Expo Center

5100 E. Broadway Ave., Spokane Valley, WA 99212

Hours: Mon, Tue, Thur, & Fri, 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

Mead Union Stadium

12509 N. Market St., Mead, WA 99021

Hours: Wed – Fri, 4 – 8 p.m.

Sat & Sun, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

CHAS Health Denny Murphy Clinic

1001 W. Second Ave., Spokane, WA 99201

Hours: Tue – Fri, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sat, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

As of January 15, 2022, your insurance will cover the purchase of at-home COVID-19 tests. Make sure to keep your receipt! If you are a **Premiera member** [click here to be reimbursed](#). If you are a **Kaiser member** [login to the Member Portal](#) then click on COVID-19 Resources and “Submit a Claim.”

More Information to Assist You

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Domestic Violence](#)

Domestic violence — also known as intimate partner violence — occurs between people who are or have been in a close relationship. Domestic violence can take many forms, including emotional, sexual and physical abuse, stalking and threats of abuse. It can happen in heterosexual or same-sex relationships.

Women aren't the only victims of domestic violence. [Understand the signs](#) of domestic violence against men, and know how to get help.

- [Navigating Through Grief & Loss](#)

When a death takes place, you may experience a wide range of emotions, even when the death is expected. Many people report feeling an initial stage of numbness after first learning of a death, but there is no real order to the grieving process.

Employee Information Portal (covid19.spokanecity.org/)

Remember, this Employee Information Portal is a great resource for employees to stay current on what's happening with the COVID-19 response. The [Employee Information Portal](#) can be accessed from work or home, using a computer or mobile device. All of the emailed information we have sent to employees is archived here.