

2001 Annual Report Executive Summary

Lower Yakima County Enterprise Community

Lower Yakima County REC is located in south central Washington and includes approximately 15,000 residents in and around the rural communities of Grandview and Sunnyside. Our EC is located in the heart of one of the most productive agricultural areas in the country. We were designated as a Round 1 rural enterprise community by USDA in 1994. Lead agency for the program is Yakima County. Lower Yakima County REC is also the name of the nonprofit agency formed to manage the program on behalf of the county. The agency was incorporated in late 1998, at which time the agency board was formally designated as the citizen advisory group for the program. Yakima County transferred day to day management and operation of the program to the agency in January 2000 when the agency hired its first staff members. The agency expanded in late 2000 when it implemented a Home Ownership Training and Counseling Program to assist local residents. The program has been a catalyst in a variety of local initiative efforts in the community since its inception.

Our Strategic Plan identified a series of specific goals categorized under the broad headings of Economic Development, Education and Job Training, Public Infrastructure and Housing. Involvement in community projects addressing these goals has ranged from limited technical assistance to substantial financial investments. Program activities in 2001 continued to provide valuable assistance to focused locally generated community initiatives in support of our Strategic Plan. It was a very exciting year for our communities, with our support contributing to significant successes on a number of development initiatives including: „h YVCC Expansion - A \$1.1 million 7000 square foot expansion at the Grandview campus of Yakima Valley Community College was completed. „h Worksource Center - After several years of planning and effort, this new facility opened in Spring. The project brings together fifteen state and private agencies involved in workforce development in a coordinated case management environment. „h Sunnyside Community Center - The City received state CDBG funding for the project in mid-year and construction is scheduled to begin in spring, 2002. The 9,000 square foot Center will include a gym, kitchen, drop in game center and computer lab. „h Bienestar Family Transitional Shelter- Late in 2001, \$280,000 for this shelter providing transitional housing for families with children was approved by HUD. „h Industrial Property Preparation - The Ports of Sunnyside and Grandview completed major transportation and site preparation projects on three industrial sites, making them ready to go for new business. „h Horizon Building - Port of Sunnyside secured \$1.6 million of local, state and federal resources to finance construction of this facility. The project will allow relocation and expansion for Horizon of Sunnyside, a community-based agency providing jobs and training services for the developmentally disabled. „h Healthcare initiatives - Sunnyside Community Hospital, the only hospital in our EC, sponsored a series of initiatives. The hospital obtained USDA funding for a telemedicine/education project. They also gained designation as the state's first Regional Osteopathic Medical Training Site. Our program is assisting formation of Sunnyside Regional Healthcare Consortium, a partnership of local healthcare, schools and workforce development programs. „h After School Programs - Local EC school districts were successful in a partner application for 21st Century Learning Center funding. The program will create three after school learning centers for students and their families. These and other local successes will provide opportunity for EC residents now and in the future.

The year was not without challenges however. Our area suffered the loss of two major industrial employers, leaving the community of Grandview with serious fiscal challenges. A major drought, combined with a series of destructive storms, severely impacted our all-important agricultural industry. And like elsewhere, we shared in the adverse impacts of the tragic events on September 11th. We look forward to a challenging year ahead as we plan for the eventual sunset of our EC designation. We anticipate a major re-orientation of our efforts toward capacity building internal to our agency. This effort is vital to the transition from reliance on the original EC funding in order to continue and expand on our initiatives. Our efforts to date have helped assure the long-term sustainability of core community efforts such as industrial development, education and workforce training. Now we recognize the need to focus on our programmatic sustainability to continue providing support to our communities in the future.