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TOP STORY

WSU apples are bringing in unprecedented royalties, university president tells Yakima Rotary

JANELLE RETKA Yakima Herald-Republic **Aug 1, 2019** Updated **Aug 1, 2019**



Evan Abell, Yakima Herald-Republic

Washington State University's Cosmic Crisp apples will be in supermarkets by year's end, and they have already generated unprecedented revenue, according to the university's president.

Speaking at a Rotary Club of Yakima meeting Thursday, Kirk Schulz lauded the new fruit variety.

"If you haven't had one of those Cosmic Crisp apples, they're amazing," he said. "The first one I had they gave to me ... and so we cut it, ate it and I said, 'Man, this is fantastic. Thank you for picking that and giving it to us,' and they had picked it 10 months ago. The shelf life on these things is just amazing."

The cross between Honeycrisp and Enterprise apples has been in development at the university since 1998. In 2017, trees were distributed to growers.

Schulz said the university received a certain percentage of royalties from tree sales as well as fruit sales.

"Already just from the tree sales alone, it's the largest revenue stream that's ever come in from any intellectual property the university has done in 129 years," he said.

For now, proceeds are being used to market the fruit. But in the future, Schulz said it would be used for student scholarships, campus infrastructure and to support university reading programs.

"The industry bet heavily on it for the university, and I think a couple years from now we'll all be able to celebrate," he said.

Schulz also said that Yakima was host to more WSU nursing and pharmacy students than the university's Everett campus.

"We want to continue to grow and invest in this particular area, particularly in the health sciences," he said of Yakima. "I think we have great partnerships here and we want to continue to foster those partnerships moving forward."

At the university's new medical school — entering its third year this fall — 80 Washington candidates had been selected this year out of 1,650 applicants, he said. Schulz said the school had been intentional about selecting in-state students. He said the medical school has partnered with 100 clinics throughout the state for student placements.

"These students are fabulous young men and women that want to serve in rural and underserved areas," he said. "Part of what we want to do is make sure that when they're out and about in these areas, that they feel the warmth that we have in so many of our rural communities that sometimes don't come across in those large cities."

Yakima, like other rural areas across the state, is in need of more medical professionals, as nursing positions experience long vacancies and the wait list to be taken on by a general practitioner is often long.

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