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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SNOVALLEY PRIDE, THE CITY OF CARNATION, AND LOCAL BUSINESSES RESPOND TO PRIDE FLAG THEFT AND VANDALISM**

CARNATION, Washington – In the early morning hours of June 17, 2023, pride flags hanging from local businesses were ripped from their poles in downtown Carnation, resulting in damaged storefronts. In a few short hours, community members replaced the stolen property, and the flags were up again.

The City is saddened to report that on June 20, 2023, a few of our local businesses became the targets of vandalism once again. Community leaders are unified in their stance that intolerance is unacceptable in Carnation.

“The people of Carnation have demonstrated incredible love and support for our businesses and the LGBTQIA+ community,” says Deputy Mayor Tim Harris. “We are working with local and state authorities to investigate these incidents and will prosecute them to the fullest extent possible. Carnation is a city where diversity is celebrated, and all are welcome. Hate has no place here.”

In addition to reports made by local businesses to the King County Sheriff’s Office, the City submitted a report to the Department of Justice at the federal level and state level.

SnoValley Pride founder Gregory Jamiel, alongside advocate Jessica Merizan, coordinated Carnation’s first annual Pride Picnic on June 11, 2023.

Jamiel says that the pride flags are a symbol of safety for the queer community “That is exactly what it means when we say, ‘love drives out hate,’” says Jamiel. “The love we have for our families and the desire to keep them safe...creates safety through community.”

Merizan says that “our reaction is what speaks volumes about us. Thank you to the businesses, city officials, and community members who have made it clear that our town has no place for hate and will not tolerate it. We take care of each other in Carnation.”

“The thing that I continue to love about the City and this community, is that it didn’t take a call to action from the City Manager, or the Mayor, or the City Council,” Mayor Jim Ribail said at the June 20, 2023, City Council Meeting. “Good people saw that there was a need to act, and they took it upon themselves to make sure everyone feels welcome in our community. That's

what community is, and that's what Carnation is.”

For more information, feel free to contact City Manager Ana Cortez at [ana.cortez@carnationwa.gov](mailto:ana.cortez@carnationwa.gov) or via cell at (425) 419-3697.

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*Carnation is a rural western Washington community of 2,220 residents that is approximately 1.1 square miles in size. Framed by the Cascade foothills and located where the Tolt and Snoqualmie Rivers meet, the City is within easy reach of Seattle. Carnation offers an abundance of natural beauty and outdoor experiences, including biking, hiking, camping, and fishing. In our downtown, you can visit our unique shops and restaurants.*