

April 2008

City Working to Lower Trash & Recycling Costs

By Kathy Sexton, City Manager

In order to accomplish the City of Derby's mission to create vibrant neighborhoods, nurture a strong business community, and preserve beautiful green spaces, the City Council asked me to explore franchising residential trash and recycling collection services.

Franchising trash means that on a given city street, one company's truck would pick up all trash on the same day, eliminating the current practice of multiple trucks on various days throughout the week. Franchising also means recycling would be easier and more economical. Franchising means we could have a citywide clean-up day when residents can put bulky items at the curb for no additional charge.

In putting this project seventh on the City Council's list of priorities for staff to accomplish this year, the Council recognizes that currently residents of Derby pay varying rates for their trash collection to several different private companies. Quarterly rates range from in the \$40 range to the \$60 range. Why should different rates be charged for the same service to next-door neighbors?

Besides the direct costs, the City Council also recognizes the benefits that would occur if fewer big trash trucks drove on our residential streets. Benefits include less wear and tear on streets, less noise and air pollution, and better access to curbside recycling.

Franchising trash means that waste collection would be treated like a utility, similar to electricity, gas, water, sewer, and cable. In most cities around the country, trash collection is treated like a utility.

Historically, it has not been treated that way in the Wichita metro area, but that is changing. The cities of Clearwater, Bel Aire, Park City, Cheney, and Kechi have all implemented forms of franchising in recent years that have reduced costs to many residents and enhanced recycling efforts. Derby can too.

You might have read in recent weeks that the Sedgwick County Commission is considering banning grass clippings from residential waste collection beginning January 1, 2009. Also, the County is considering requiring trash collection companies to offer curbside recycling for no additional fee (cost built into the monthly trash collection rate for everyone) and a cheaper price for a smaller container (for those households that produce less waste).

Sedgwick County is acting on a recommendation from its Solid Waste Management Committee, of which I am a member. The City of Derby's efforts to franchise trash and recycling collection are in sync with the Sedgwick County efforts. Both efforts will

reduce costs and enhance the quality of life in Derby. Approval of only one effort will result in less savings to residents.

The County Commission is holding a public hearing about its efforts to enhance recycling and reduce trash rates on Thursday, April 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sedgwick County Zoo Auditorium. If you are interested in this issue, I would encourage you to attend or to share your thoughts on the subject with our County Commissioner, Gwen Welshimer, at 660-9300.

In May, the County Commission will hopefully approve its plan and send it to the state for endorsement. Then, the City of Derby will complete design of our franchising plan, solicit proposals from trash companies, and then implement the new system later this year. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact me at kathysexton@derbyweb.com or 788-3132.