

# Trash rates increase

## Watch for coupons for bulky waste

By Linda Stinnett

Informer staff writer

Derby's trash and curbside recycling rates are increasing this month, but remain below most rates in the area, including a \$20 per month plan being promoted in Wichita.

Local rates will increase by nearly 3 percent, to \$45.43 per quarter for a 95-gallon cart and \$39.27 per quarter for a 65-gallon cart, according to information from the city of Derby. Under the terms of the initial contract with Waste Connections, prices were \$44.25 per quarter for the larger cart and \$38.25 per quarter for the small cart.

The rate increase came through an increase in the consumer price index, according to City Manager Kathy Sexton. The city signed a seven-year contract with Waste Connections in August

2009, with stipulations that annual increases would only be allowed due to increases in the CPI, diesel fuel costs and regulatory fees at the landfill.

"There were no changes in governmental regulatory fees at the landfill and the change in diesel fuel prices did not meet the threshold required in the contract to be allowed to be passed along to customers in the form of a rate increase," Sexton said.

While the initial contract with Waste Connections did decrease trash costs for some Derby residents, some were already paying the bid rate or lower. However, Sexton said the decision made by the city staff, city council and a citizen's advisory committee to contract with only one company had a major impact on the price gained in the bidding process.

In addition, the decision to seek a seven-year contract and to specify reasons for price increases actually helped keep the costs lower.

"I think we made it clear to

the interested companies that we wanted good prices, but we were not willing to sacrifice quality service," she said.

Some cities have sought a guaranteed price for multiple years, which puts the vendor at risk, she said. She explains that risk can actually add cost to a price quote, because a vendor will automatically build in a cushion since the price of doing business many times will go up each year.

Sexton has emphasized that point with the area cities who have contacted her about the franchise system. The long-term commitment also allowed the city to negotiate the standardized, color coded trash and recycling carts, automated trash trucks which reduce labor and pollution, limitations on extra fees for cart pickup and delivery and fuel surcharges and customer notification of pickup changes due to holidays.

"We used seven years so that

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companies of different sizes could compete better," she said. "Companies are better able to get bank loans for new trucks and carts if they have a long-term contract in hand, which levels the playing field between big and small companies."

The first year of the franchise agreement has only brought a few complaints to the city, she said, and she believes Waste Connections has expeditiously handled all of those. Most of the complaints were in the transition from private services to the implementation of the Waste Connections service. There have also been some complaints as residents learned how to use the RecycleBank website and others have noted

that they still see trash trucks more than one time a week. Sexton notes that the city has been divided into five trash routes and borderline streets do see trucks two times a week.

The most common feedback to the city has been on the biweekly recycling pickup. Through October, 89 percent of Derby residents had signed up for curbside recycling and nearly 1,555 tons of waste has been recycled through that program – about 24 percent of the total waste stream.

As residents have learned to recycle, Sexton said she commonly hears from people who are filling their recycling container faster than their trash bin. They frequently ask if weekly recycling will happen.

"No, it's not such an overwhelming need that it

will happen anytime soon," she said.

Instead, she suggested those with overflow use the Dillons Marketplace recycling center, smash their recyclables down more or sign up for a second cart from Waste Connections. That cart will cost nearly \$3.75 per month.

"Obviously, they will have to judge for themselves, if the cost is outweighed by the benefits of the RecycleBank points and coupons," Sexton said.

It should also be noted that those who have the larger trash cart and are not filling it weekly, may wish to downsize to the less expensive size. That change can be made annually at no cost to the consumer.

In addition, after the third year of the city's contract, it can negotiate with Waste

Connections for an even smaller cart size. That clause was written for the ultimate recyclers who produce very little trash.

Included with the cost of trash service in Derby are two coupons for use each year for bulky waste pickup. Those coupons are being mailed this month and will allow residents to get rid of larger items such as old furniture, appliances, tree limbs, etc. by using the coupons for free curbside collection of that waste or to take a pickup load of solid waste to the transfer station at no cost.

For additional information on local trash services, go to [www.derbyweb.com](http://www.derbyweb.com), [www.recyclebank.com](http://www.recyclebank.com) or [www.wasteconnectionswichita.com](http://www.wasteconnectionswichita.com).