

Casper city manager calls for cutting trash

By Tim Monroe

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CASPER – Casper City Manager Tom Forslund says residents of his city and county are creating too much trash. And he says while recycling is good, using less is even better.

Forslund spoke to the Casper Rotary recently, and he outlined how trash is a growing problem in Casper. He noted that in 1998, Natrona County households and businesses generated 79,431 tons of trash a year, or about 6.5 pounds per person every day. In 2007, Natrona county residents and businesses generated 107,000 tons of trash, or about 8.3 pounds per day for each resident of the county.

"That's a 28 percent increase in only nine years," Forslund said. "The national average is 4.61 pounds per day!" And, he said, the U.S. leads the world in consumption and disposal of solid waste.

He noted that the city's balefill operation is being upgraded at a cost of several million dollars to provide a place where future trash can be compacted into bales and buried.

Forslund said many residents want to help by recycling their newspapers and magazines and bottles and cans. "It makes them feel good and soothes their consciences," he said. "People are willing to do a little bit as long as it's convenient and the cost is minimal and, most importantly, it doesn't affect their lifestyles."

But more important than recycling is a focus on consuming less.

"We need to stop generating trash in the first place and stop consuming our limited resources," he said. "People need to change their lifestyles and patterns of consumption."

The city manager said Americans are out-of-touch with the impact of their everyday choices and habits.

"While none of us want to go back to the horse and buggy days, we can look at how we live our lives and see what we can do to better preserve our natural resources," Forslund said. "Relatively simple lifestyle changes can have dramatic effects."

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