

Casper landfill readies for change



Jason Nowak, a pit loader for the city of Casper, pushes garbage into a bailer on Wednesday. The Casper landfill is getting ready to accept garbage from many communities around the state. Photo by Christine Robinson, Star-Tribune.

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This year will be a year for change for the Casper landfill.

A new pit will be opened, an old one closed.

Surrounding communities will decide if they want to haul their garbage to this or other landfills.

The city will build a construction and demolition waste area to protect average landfill users from the hazards of the larger pit.

The Casper City Council may ban yard waste and other items from the landfill pit.

These aren't all the changes coming to the landfill, but rank among the most important, and create a busy year for solid waste division manager Cynthia Langston.

"It's definitely a big year for all the landfill owners in the state, because they will be making a 10-year plan and we will be putting ours together," Langston said.

Each landfill in the state is required to have a 10-year plan finished by July 1, 2009. In that plan, many landfill directors will decide if and when they will begin to truck garbage from their gathering area to the Casper landfill.

Glenrock, for example, will begin hauling this year. Douglas and Rawlins will need to decide this year where they plan to take their garbage.

Midwest and Kaycee already haul part or all of their waste to the Casper landfill.

The Casper City Council will also consider banning yard waste. This means all leaves, tree branches and grass will need to be composted instead of entering the landfill cells with the rest of the county's garbage.

Yardwaste fills a large amount of the landfill, and when cells cost millions of dollars to build and cover, Langston hopes more recyclable material will be diverted.

In return, the city may consider implementing a curbside recycling program for yard waste.

"We are going to ultimately ban as many things as we can," said Council member Paul Bertoglio. "But we are going to try and do a lot more education before we actually do any banning. We will get much better compliance if we work with the city's system to educate first."

Bertoglio, who is also on the city's solid waste committee, said much of the banning may not happen until 2010.

The city will also consider establishing more drop-off points for recyclables and may add a No. 2 plastics container to the row of green bins.

"The bans are something that make sense, but ultimately there's no point in banning without support from the community," Bertoglio said.

One of the Casper landfill's biggest expenses this year, which will come from \$14 million recently allocated by the state, will be closing the current landfill cell.

For roughly \$6 million, the cell will be sealed with a leak-proof liner. It costs about \$3 million alone just to test the liner to ensure it won't leak, Langston said.

Langston hopes to close the new cell 13 acres at a time to prevent this kind of undertaking again.

Lastly, the city will buy two new bailers, which Langston said the landfill desperately needs.

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