

Casper pitches landfill to cities as money saver

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CASPER - Small cities and towns across the state are realizing that it's cheaper to haul waste to massive landfills than to deal with expensive federal regulations.

The permitting process for installing new landfills can take up to five years, according to Paul Bertoglio, Casper City Council member and solid waste committee member for the past 12 years.

He and other city officials have been laying out a scenario for smaller governments across the state: Watch your trash costs triple if you try to install a new landfill, or bring your trash to Casper, and the costs will only double.

For Rawlins, Bertoglio said that it's a matter of "when," not "if," the town will transfer its waste to the Casper landfill. He estimated about two years of usage left at the Rawlins landfill and said the two cities are close to reaching an agreement.

"I think that's where the council is going," Rawlins City Manager Steve Galnor said. "I can't say for sure, but that's what the solid waste management plan says - we'll be moving toward transferring trash."

Bertoglio said he and other city officials have been working on "diversion programs" with other towns eyeing Casper's landfill, such as Rawlins, Douglas and Glenrock.

"There will be a transitional period in there," Bertoglio said. "They're going to try and minimize the amount of solid waste they ship to us. They don't want to be shipping grass clippings or branches and things."

Galnor said city officials in Rawlins don't plan to transfer construction debris, grass clippings or branches to Casper to minimize their costs. He said he thinks about two flat-bed trucks would trek to Casper each day loaded with bailed and bagged trash. Rawlins also purchased a bagging machine, Galnor said, which would minimize the amount of trash flying off trucks on the way to Casper.

Though prices vary for towns that want to haul their trash to Casper's landfill, Mayor Kenyne Schlager said the added income would help stabilize rates for Casper residents.