

Casper recycling grew in '09

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Loraine Powell picks through dozens of trash bags filled with plastics last fall at United Church of Christ in Casper. The church has been saving plastics to be recycled since November 2008. (AP Photo)

CASPER — The city of Casper's movement toward eco-friendly trash disposal moved forward this year with the implementation of a plastics recycling program.

The city approved a plastics recycling program that began Oct. 1, three months later than the program's scheduled kickoff date.

Depots are available throughout Casper for residents to leave different types of plastic, which is then hauled to a third-party recycling company.

The city's Public Services Department has also been working to prepare diversion plans that would keep recyclable, compostable waste away from the city's landfill.

Cindie Langston, solid-waste manager at the Casper Landfill, said earlier this year that curbside grass and leaf removal would be available for about \$4.50 each month with the purchase of a \$120 90-gallon green container. Payments for the container could be stretched over two years, which would bring the price of leaf and grass disposal to about \$9.50 each month.

Green waste accounts for between 14 and 20 percent of the waste deposited in the landfill, Langston said. That plan is a long-term goal of the solid-waste division, although nothing has been approved by the Casper City Council, she said.

Diverting that waste away from the landfill and to the compost pile is not only free for residents who haul their grass to the waste facility, but also would save taxpayers money because the multimillion-dollar landfill cell wouldn't fill up as quickly.

The city would also move to prevent branches and cardboard from making it to the landfill. Instead of having two extra trash pickups each month, Casper residents would have one pickup for cardboard and one for branches.

"Cardboard and paper actually takes up between 30 and 35 percent of the landfill, so we want to encourage people to not put cardboard in their trash containers," Langston said earlier this year.

Those changes could take place between April and July of 2011.

Rates for out-of-county residents were also increased this year. Forslund said the city spent \$16 million on equipment and buildings, but two-thirds of those improvements benefit out-of-county residents.

Cities and towns that enter into an agreement with Casper to bring their trash would either have to “buy in” and pay an upfront fee for the improvements or pay a higher fee when trash is dumped.

Forslund said most communities discussing trash deals with the city are interested in paying the surcharge. Individuals with out-of-county license plates bringing trash would either have to prove the trash was generated in Natrona County or pay increased rates.

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