

## **Mayor responds on trash collection issues**

As you may already know, the City of Manitou Springs is nearing the completion of the almost two-year process to create a citywide residential trash and recycling program. City Council will get our first look at the proposal at our regular meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, a letter will be sent to every residence detailing the proposal and inviting public comment. There will also be an informational meeting, devoted solely to this proposal, at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall on April 14. Thereafter, perhaps as soon as our April 20 regular meeting, City Council will take a final vote on whether to proceed with this program. At each of these meetings, public input is not only welcomed but also encouraged. There will be ample opportunity for questions and answers.

As noted above, it has been a long public process to get to the point where we can offer a favorably priced, high-quality service that is tailored to the needs of our community. The idea was first brought to the City Council by a group of concerned citizens, led by Teri Christman, who were convinced that there must be a better way to handle our trash and recycling needs than having multiple companies (some offering no recycling or charging extra for it) operating six days a week in our neighborhoods. These seemingly tireless volunteers continue to be very involved in this effort and deserve our thanks and appreciation.

The process to establish a residential trash and recycling program is strictly controlled by Colorado State statutes. Businesses and multi-family dwellings over seven units are excluded. Cities considering the program must announce their intentions in local papers and adhere to strict publication requirements. Over a year ago, the city, as required, issued a Request for Interest (RFI) informing all local haulers about the proposed program and soliciting preliminary information on pricing and structuring. Only two companies, Bestway Disposal and Springs Waste Systems, responded to the RFI, and both have since attended public meetings and met with staff and citizen volunteers to discuss the proposed program. The city has worked hard to satisfy both haulers' concerns in this proposal.

Also, over the last year the city has worked to structure the proposal to address resident concerns by soliciting input from residents and incorporating that input into the proposal. That is why, for example, your water service is in no way involved, seasonal residents can opt out of year-round service, and residents who do not currently have trash and recycling service will not be required to participate.

Finally, after much hard work and several rewrites, the city issued a Request for Bids (RFB) with bids due this March. Only one company, Bestway Disposal, chose to submit a bid. Springs Waste Systems chose not to submit a bid. Throughout this entire process, including the RFB, the city has complied with every legal requirement set forth in the state statute. Every local hauler was given a fair and equal opportunity to participate. In the future, if this proposal is adopted, every local hauler will likewise be afforded a fair and equal opportunity to participate when this contract is up for renewal.

A citywide residential trash and recycling program holds many benefits for the city as well as our residents. It will reduce the wear and tear on our streets. Since all residential pickup will occur on Tuesday, it will enhance the quality of life and quietude in our neighborhoods. Many residents will experience a better quality of service at a reduced cost. Once the city is able to

bring the billing in house, hopefully within one year, costs should go down significantly for every participating resident.

However, perhaps the most compelling benefit from this proposal is the opportunity for Manitou Springs to realize up to \$48,000 per year in new revenue **WITHOUT RAISING TAXES OR IMPOSING NEW FEES ON TAXPAYERS!** Sure, we could have just imposed a "road surcharge" on every hauler operating within The City. They would have simply raised their fees and passed that cost on to consumers. Under this proposal, new revenue is created by the economies of scale resulting from having a single hauler. If anyone has another way for the city to increase revenues without adding burdensome new taxes or fees, while also reducing costs to consumers, I promise that we will give it the same amount of time and energy that has been put into this proposal.

**Sincerely Mayor Marc Snyder**

[Return to Article Index](#)