

Trash collection service will start May 1

By Jeanne Davant

Manitou Springs residents could save money on trash collection and recycling under the new single-hauler waste disposal program that is set to go into effect May 1.

Bestway Disposal was the low bidder — in fact, the only company to bid — on providing trash and recycling services.

"We now have a number of different carriers," said Deputy City Administrator Mike Leslie. "All of them travel on the same streets, on different days. We are taking the example of other communities that have gone to single haulers to eliminate all of those extra trash trips." Bestway will make only one trip — on Tuesdays — to serve all of Manitou Springs, Leslie said.

"They have the equipment to get up on the high roads, and we'll have only one trash truck on city streets," he said. That will save wear and tear on the streets and reduce the city's carbon footprint. It also should result in a lower bill for citizens who live in single-family homes or in multi-family residences with seven or fewer units.

Bestway's proposed contract has not yet been approved by City Council, but the company has offered to provide trash collection service at the following monthly rates:

For Bestway-provided waste collection carts collected at the curb:

- 96-gallon cart: \$18.25
- 64-gallon cart: \$17.75
- 32-gallon cart: \$17.50

For customer-provided containers at the curb:

- Two 32-gallon cans: \$17.25
- One 32-gallon can: \$17.00
- Two lawn-size bags: \$16.25
- One lawn-size bag: \$16.25

For an additional \$4 a month, Bestway will provide carry-out service for people who aren't able to get their containers to the curb.

All prices include a 64-gallon recycling cart that will provide single-stream recycling. In other words, you can place all acceptable recyclable materials in the cart without having to sort them.

Acceptable materials include newspapers, mixed papers, phone books, steel or tin cans, plastic milk jugs, yogurt containers, corrugated cardboard, cereal and tissue boxes, plastics numbered 1 through 7, empty aerosol cans, magazines, office paper, brown paper bags, aluminum and aluminum foil, and glass bottles and jars.

Bestway will provide a full list of acceptable materials when your cart is delivered.

"The rates Bestway is proposing, as far as we can tell, are cheaper than anyone else," Leslie said.

All households that have trash service now will be required to convert to Bestway.

Questions about trash service?

If you have questions about the new trash and recycling service, you want to switch to the new service, or you want information about options for service to multi-family units, call Bestway Disposal at 633-8709.

Residents will soon receive a letter with details about the collection service and how and when to switch.

A public meeting to provide information and answer questions will be held at 7 p.m. April 14 at City Hall.

If you're currently a Bestway customer, Bestway will automatically switch you to the new lower pricing for your service level.

If you currently use another trash collection service provider, you will need to contact Bestway. Since many people pay for service in advance for several months, you can wait until your current agreement ends to switch. But you must call Bestway before Aug. 1 — after that date, no other company will be allowed to provide residential waste pick-up service.

Residents who do not currently have waste pick-up can join the program by calling Bestway.

For the time being, Bestway will handle billing and will offer customers the ability to receive paperless statements and to pay bills online.

"There is some thought that in a couple of years the city would take over billing to relieve even more expense," Leslie said. "If we didn't have them doing billing, it might lower bills by about \$5 a month."

Sewer rates may change

Some customers may notice a slight change in their water bills next month.

That's because the city is adjusting sewer rates based on January-February water usage.

Manitou residents pay a certain amount per thousand gallons of water use per month, which covers the fee the city pays to Colorado Springs Utilities for wastewater treatment.

The city surveyed all accounts that showed less than 1,000 gallons or more than 7,000 gallons of water use during the survey period and compared the use with what that household normally uses.

"We look for anything out of the norm," Leslie said. "If you've got a residence that normally uses 3,000 to 4,000 gallons and all of a sudden it's down to 1,000, we probably will use a different measure." If usage takes a big jump upward, that might indicate a water leak, in which case the residents likely would be notified.

The billing rate might be adjusted up or down depending on what the survey found. The survey was conducted during the winter to avoid jumps in use due to irrigation.

Leslie said few if any of the 150 accounts that might be adjusted will show any substantial change.

"They may notice a buck or two," Leslie said. "I would be shocked if anybody's water bill goes up 20 bucks."

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