

Last week the city council approved a new contract for refuse and recyclables collection with Advanced Disposal.

History

Since 2003, we have contracted with our current refuse and recycling hauler for all residential properties in the city. Advanced Disposal recently acquired the company, and it has gone through a couple other ownership changes in the eleven years we have been with them. They were formerly Veolia Environmental Services, Onyx Waste Services, and Superior Services.

The refuse and recycling service is mandatory for all residential properties in the city. A few apartments and small businesses opt to participate in the collection. Our current contract is a three-year contract, expiring at the end of this year.

The trend in the waste hauling industry has been to change from a bag system to a cart system. The carts increase efficiency by automating the collection and allowing the recycling to be collected on an every other week cycle. In the long-run, the automation also reduces job injuries and workers compensation claims. In the eye of the beholder, the uniform containers can also improve the aesthetics of curbside collection. An additional benefit is a reduction in loose materials blowing about the neighborhood.

This spring, Advanced Disposal said they would like to convert Evansville to a cart system in a new contract. Although the carts are more efficient, they do require an upfront cost which likely meant a cost increase over several years to pay for the upfront cost. However it would still be the city's option to stay with its existing bag system.

Request For Proposals

In anticipation of the city's contract with Advanced Disposal expiring at the end of the year, the city conducted a request for proposals (RFP) for a company to collect, transport, and dispose of refuse and recycling from residences in the city.

Five companies responded with eleven proposals. All five companies offered automated cart collection; three offered a bag system; one offered a hybrid cart and bag system; and two offered longer contracts with a cart system.

Obviously it was an apples-to-oranges comparison, but there was enough for a reasonable evaluation of the proposals. We also specified a provision in the RFP that the final contract would be negotiated; this maintained some flexibility to work with the varying proposals.

In reviewing the proposals, I considered a number of criteria such as the company's experience with similar sized municipalities, customer service, experience changing to an automated cart system, and estimated fees over the life of the contract. I also checked references. I recommended negotiating a seven-year contract for automated carts with Advanced Disposal.

Changes Under New Contract

With much discussion during the September and October meetings, the city council approved the contract last week. Although the contractor will still be Advanced Disposal, we will be

switching over to an automated cart system at the start of the new year. The per household cost is budgeted to increase from \$139 per year to \$153 per year.

The collection schedule will change a bit. Refuse collection will still be on a weekly basis; however, there will be Tuesday and Wednesday routes instead of Tuesday and Thursday. Recycling will change to an every other week collection schedule. Bulk item collection will go to a monthly collection on the first collection day of the month, but extra tags will no longer be needed. Appliances and freon-containing items will still need to be scheduled with the contractor and have an additional charge.

Residents will be able to select from 35, 65, or 95 gallon carts. We are still working out the details for the selection process with Advanced Disposal. The process will be something along the lines of every resident receiving a postcard to return with their selection within thirty days. Any non-returns or late responses will get the 95 gallon cart size as the default choice. We will have sample carts on display during the thirty days, so you can see the comparative sizes and wheel them around. There is no difference in prices for different size carts, but there will be a \$150 charge to change sizes after the selection period.

Other highlights of the new contract include: we will begin accepting electronic-waste at the Public Works Shop, holidays will delay the collection schedule for the entire week rather than just the day, all residences up to four units will be required to participate in the system (the old requirement was two units), churches will no longer receive free collection service, and collection may begin as early as 6:00 am.