

Recycling Carts Are Coming

By Alan Holbach, Director of Public Works

In the late fall of 2013 Charlotte County residents that are served by Waste Management will begin receiving recycling carts similar to the garbage carts they have used for automated trash collection since 2009. The carts will be delivered to each residence and may be used immediately. The bins that are currently used will no longer be serviced once the cart is delivered. For residents that currently need new bins due to breakage or theft, we recommend using cardboard boxes or other containers in the brief interim because replacement bins are no longer available.

The switch to recycling carts from bins has dual goals. The first is to help control collection costs and the second is to increase public participation by making recycling easier. In 2008, the Florida Legislature enacted House Bill 7135 which established a new statewide recycling goal of 75 percent to be achieved by the year 2020. With a current recycling rate of 39 percent, Charlotte County is working diligently to meet the statewide mandate.

Charlotte County adopted single stream recycling in March of 2011, which allows recyclable materials to be co-mingled in the recycling cart. The recyclables are taken to a state-of-the-art facility where the items are processed by equipment that separates the different plastics, metals and paper products and palletizes them so it can be reused to make new products.

Like the garbage carts, the recycling carts will be collected in an automated manner. It will be necessary to leave a 5' clear zone around the carts to allow ample room for the Waste Management trucks to service the individual carts.

The 64-gallon recycling carts will be distinguishable from the trash carts by their distinctive yellow tops. The yellow top has an illustration clearly showing what can and cannot be placed in the cart. The carts will also have a bag attached that contains a pamphlet that further details the recycling program as well as all the available sanitation services and options available to our residents.

As a reminder, these items can all be placed in the recycle cart together: plastic bottles and containers marked 1 through 7 with caps and lids removed; clean paper, cardboard, junk mail, phone books, magazines and newspaper; aluminum, steel and tin cans; glass bottles and jars with caps and lids removed; and dairy and juice cartons.

When recycling, a common mistake to avoid is placing plastic shopping bags and polystyrene products (foam products such as egg cartons, insulated cups, foam take-home food containers and foam packing materials) into the carts. These materials can be recycled at your local grocery store. Make sure your recyclables are free of food contamination such as milk and juices left in cartons and food stuck to containers. Additionally never bag your recyclables, just place them loosely in the cart.

The County also has two residential convenience stations that accept household hazardous waste, scrap metal, batteries, cardboard, yard waste, newspaper, etc. These stations are available for use by Charlotte County residents with proof of residency. Keep in mind that waste such as household garbage is not accepted at these facilities.

The existing recycling bins, which will no longer be processed once the recycling carts are distributed, can be kept by residents and put to other uses, such as storage containers or as container gardens.

Charlotte County residents are encouraged to visit our web site to become familiar with the do's and don'ts of recycling as well as the operating hours and locations of the residential convenience stations. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click "Garbage & Recycling" in the Popular Links.