

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MARCH 10, 2009 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
Review of Solid Waste Collection Services	Resolution Ordinance Motion ✓ Discussion Only	Michael Baker Deputy Village Manager

SYNOPSIS

Staff will provide a status report to the Village Council regarding the implementation of the new solid waste contract with ARC Disposal and Recycling, Inc.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Five Year Plan and Goals for 2008-2013 identified *Exceptional Municipal Organization*. A supporting objective of this goal is *Top-Quality Core Services Responsive to Current and Future Community and Resident Needs*.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for discussion purposes only.

BACKGROUND

The Village's three year solid waste contract with ARC Disposal took effect on March 31, 2008. In December 2008, Village staff met with representatives from ARC to discuss a range of issues related to the transition to the Village's new solid waste vendor.

Given the significant impact involved in changing solid waste collectors, especially for a community with over 14,000 household collection points, there were several aspects related to the transition and service delivery under ARC that are positive or went smoothly, including:

- *Change in Pickup Routes* – Both ARC and Village staff agreed that the change in pickup routes and schedules was relatively well-communicated to the public with few complaints received. Notifications of the new routes / schedules were communicated through flyers distributed door-to-door as well as informational items on the Village website, DGTV and in the Village Corner.
- *Increase in Cart Usage* – ARC representatives indicated they have seen a steady increase in the number of residents utilizing the vendor-provided garbage carts. The pricing structure, size and convenience of the cars influenced this trend. Current cart usage stands at approximately 4,200 households, up from 2,000 under the previous hauler.
- *Amnesty Day* – The Village's annual Amnesty Day event was conducted with a minimal amount of complaints from residents.
- *Recycling Extravaganza* – The Recycling Extravaganza was well-received by residents and had been successful in generating a significant amount of recyclable material which otherwise may have been disposed of in landfill facilities.
- *Leaf Pickup* – ARC effectively implemented the Village's leaf collection program with no stickers required. As an indicator of the success of the program, estimated yard-waste sticker sale revenue

for the months of August through November amounted to \$ 49,000, as compared to \$204,000 in 2007 yard-waste sticker sales. Residents paid approximately \$155,000 less in yard-waste stickers. The Village paid a flat fee of \$136,000 to ARC for the leaf pickup program in 2008 which saved residents about \$19,000. Based on the contract language, the Village can decide to opt out of the program for 2009, which means that residents will pay the \$2.96 price for each yard waste sticker.

- *Disposing of Yard Waste in Garbage Cans* – ARC mentioned that residents commonly disposed of yard waste in regular garbage cans to avoid the cost of purchasing yard waste bags. The practice of providing “Yard Waste Only” decals to residents has seemed to work relatively well.

In addition to the items outlined above, the group developed a list of issues and concerns regarding the solid waste transition and general service delivery. Action taken to respond to these issues is also noted.

- *Disposal of Non-Recyclable Material in Recycling Bins* – ARC mentioned that residents have been placing non-recyclable material in recycling bins. Staff has addressed this issue by more prominently communicating the list of recyclable materials on the website. ARC has responded by refusing to accept certain recyclable materials in some extreme instances, in addition to providing notice to residents that the materials are not recyclable.
- *Debris Escaping from Garbage Trucks* – Some residents have complained that when garbage trucks dump waste while in motion, some of the debris is blown from the trucks. ARC has attempted to address this issue by requiring their drivers to come to a complete stop when dumping (and disciplining those drivers that don't) as well as retrofitting trucks to more effectively direct solid waste into the body of the vehicle. Complaints regarding this issue have subsided following these interventions.
- *Communication of Construction Activity* – In some instances, construction activities have prevented garbage trucks from passing through residential streets, which leads to missed pickups. This problem was compounded last year by the significant increase in capital project activity throughout the Village. Staff is modifying its internal communication process to ensure that ARC, contractors and residents are aware of the construction activity and/or the need to ensure that solid waste collection is allowed to occur. Staff is confident that better communication will most effectively address this issue.
- *Timeliness and consistency of Responses from ARC Service Representatives* – Residents contacting ARC with service inquiries complained to the Village about difficulties in reaching a customer service representatives or being transferred to different representatives and provided with inconsistent responses. Village staff has notified ARC about these occurrences and demanded that they address any customer service lapses. Complaints regarding this issue have been reduced as a result.
- *Pickup of Recycling and Garbage in Same Truck* – Some residents have commented that garbage and recycling are sometimes collected in the same truck. This occurs rarely due to time or truck capacity constraints. Staff has made ARC aware of this issue and complaints have been reduced.
- *Trucks backing up in residential neighborhoods* – On a few occasions ARC trucks have been observed backing up to more efficiently complete their routes in some residential neighborhoods. Once reported, staff has immediately communicated these observations to the ARC Route Supervisor, who has dealt with them appropriately, including discipline of the drivers.

Village staff and representatives from ARC have also identified several issues which require additional research and evaluation in order to properly address. These items are summarized in the section below:

- *Reduction in Recycling Markets* – Residents have the ability to recycle an unlimited amount of material with no direct charge. Historically, this has been due to the fact that recyclable materials are sold to vendors to cover the cost of the service. However, potential for profit for recycling has been greatly reduced due to increased service costs and falling recyclable material prices. Village staff and ARC will continue to monitor this issue.

- *Issues with Large Item Pickup* – ARC commented that in many instances residents dispose of large items (furniture, etc.) with fewer garbage stickers than required (1 sticker = 50 lbs). This may be due to resident difficulty in determining exactly how much an item weighs. Staff will continue to work with ARC to effectively communicate to residents the requirements of the solid waste programs, specifically as it pertains to large-item collection.
- *Recycling Container Size* – In most cases, one 18-gallon recycling container distributed by the Village and used by most households does not hold all of the weekly recyclable material. While ARC drivers will typically pick-up larger recyclable containers, this is a business decision of ARC and they have not indicated an interest in changing the standard of recycling container size.
- *Conduct Amnesty Day in Spring rather than Fall* – ARC has requested the Village to conduct Amnesty Day in the spring due to the fact that ARC has additional trucks available in spring which are typically in use for yard waste removal operations in the fall. Staff will consider this request, but will likely not adjust the program timing until the end of this contract.
- *Incentives for Non-Compliance with Sticker Program* – In a volume-based waste program, residents may avoid the cost of garbage stickers utilizing a variety of methods (disposing of garbage in business dumpsters, illegal dumping, etc.).
- *Merger of ARC Disposal and Allied Waste* – In 2008, the acquisition of Allied Waste by ARC’s parent company, Republic, Inc, was announced. ARC representatives that indicated that they expect no operational changes that would affect the Village’s current contract.

Rate Increase for Solid Waste Services

The Village’s three-year agreement with ARC includes gradual price increases to be implemented on April 1, 2009, as well as April 1, 2010. Rates for stickers and cart rentals over the length of the contract are as follows:

	April 2008-March 2009	April 2009-March 2010	April 2010-March 2011
Refuse/Yard Waste Sticker price	2.85	\$2.96	\$3.08
Rental Option 65 gallon cart - <i>Stickers not required.</i> Monthly fee (billed QUARTERLY).	\$15.15	\$15.76	\$16.39
Rental Option 95 gallon cart - <i>Stickers not required.</i> Monthly fee (billed QUARTERLY)	\$19.70	\$20.49	\$21.31

ATTACHMENTS

N/A