

The Village eNews

An Electronic Newsletter for Residents of The Village

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CITY TO CONSIDER NEW RECYCLING PROGRAM

Feedback from Residents Sought



Last year the City discontinued its single-stream recycling program due to the depressed state of the commodity markets, which were a victim of the deepest recession to hit this country since the Great Depression. In fact, it literally cost more to pickup, separate and transport recyclable commodities than they were worth in the marketplace. The City's decision to terminate the program was the only logical step to take given the situation at hand. The decision, however, was purely economical and did not represent a retreat from the City Council's commitment to recycling. The City's involvement in recycling began in 1991 when The Village rolled out the first curbside recycling program in the state. After a one-year hiatus, another single-stream recycling program is now available to residents of The Village, ***provided citizens want the program and are willing to pay for it.***

One thing over the years has not changed and that is the stark reality that recycling costs money. Actually, it costs a LOT of money and the high cost has hampered recycling in many parts of the country. In fact, the biggest criticism of recycling is that it costs more to recycle than to simply dump the materials in a landfill. Many economists maintain that the economic costs of recycling far outweigh the environmental benefits. It is easy to measure the costs of recycling but the benefits are intangible and difficult to quantify. Sure, it makes us feel good to save trees, water and energy and for many individuals that is all the motivation they need to recycle. Unfortunately, that is not true for the vast majority of people and voluntary recycling programs have, in many communities, been plagued by low participation rates because there is little incentive to bother with it. **Moreover, when citizens are asked to pay for a service they don't have their hearts in, there better be some really good incentives in place to make it worth their while.**

Enter Recycle Bank! Recycle Bank is a program that rewards you for recycling and allows the customer to recover their monthly costs for recycling service through various coupons and discounts for products and services offered by local and national businesses. Here is how it works:

- **Recycle.** You place all your recycling materials in the recycling cart provided by the contractor. No sorting is needed (single-stream).
- **Record.** Your cart is weighed when it is picked up and the weight is converted to Recycle Points. These points are credited to your personal Recycle Bank Account. (There is a computer chip in each cart with an account number assigned to your address. Residents can track their points online or over the phone)
- **Reward.** You redeem Points for rewards from hundreds of local and national businesses. The more you recycle the more your reward. Rewards can easily exceed your monthly costs, which are currently estimated at \$4.50 a month.
- **Mandatory Pay, Voluntary Participation.** The economics of the program dictate that all customers would be required to pay the monthly fee for recycling. Customers, however, do not have to recycle if they don't want to. - *Continued on the next page.*

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The City Council has established the month of September as a time for educating the public about the program and to get feedback from citizens. Several Townhall Meetings will be scheduled for residents to learn more about the specifics of the program and to ask questions. In addition, information about the program will be provided in brochures, on cable TV, and on the City's webpage. **The City Council wants to hear from you before making any decision on whether to go forward with this initiative.**

- Bruce K. Stone, City Manager.