

Recycling program launched

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POCATELLO — About 20 percent of city households now participate in a new municipal curbside recycling service, city officials announced Monday morning during the program's ribbon cutting ceremony at the Sanitation Department headquarters.

As the ceremony concluded, trucks rolled to make the city's first ever curbside recycling collection. Residents who
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participate pay \$5 extra per week for the service and will have their recycling bins emptied every other week on their normal collection days.

"I'm excited about it. This is one of those little steps when people ask what they can do to improve the valley, recycling is a big part of that," said Mayor Roger Chase.

Until now, the city's recycling rate has been a woeful 2.8 percent, compared with a national average of 33 percent. The city set a goal of getting 2,000 residents to sign up. As of Monday, more than 3,100 residents

had registered, and when the city delivered blue recycling bins to participants earlier this month, it sparked a wave of new enrollments, according to the city's recycling coordinator, Debbie Brady.

"We've been swamped since the carts have gone out," Brady said.

The city's goal is to increase enrollment by another 20 percent every year for the first five years of the program, until the program becomes self-sustaining.

City Councilwoman Eva Nye said Idaho communities including Idaho Falls and the Treasure Valley may be considering following Pocatello's lead by offering curbside recycling programs that allow residents to commingle their recyclables in the same bin.

Pocatello now allows par-

ticipants to mix recyclables including: newspaper, cardboard, junk mail, tin, telephone books, magazines, catalogues, paper, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, aluminum foil, steel cans including aerosol and paint cans, and cardboard boxes including cereal, laundry detergent, beverage and pizza boxes.

The city won't accept plastic bags, plastic packaging wrap, glass and used motor oil containers.

"This is a project I am happy to see come to fruition," Nye said. "We've been working on it for several years. It's easy. Everything goes into the same container."

"We've got a terrific voluntary response, so we're hopeful we can do it in the whole city."

Recyclables needn't be washed or have labels re-

moved and can be mixed together in the blue autocarts. Participants will continue to have their autocarts emptied on a weekly basis.

The city will drop off recyclables at Western Recycling's Pocatello location, where they will be bailed and sent to a facility in Portland for sorting.

Sanitation Superintendent Randy Allen said program supervisors will conduct spot checks of curbside recycling bins throughout the initial weeks of the service and educate residents who are attempting to recycle materials that are not accepted by the program.

"It's going to take a while. We expect a certain amount of contamination, but we want to give (Western Recycling) as clean a product as we can," Allen said.