



April 24, 2014
#140424-RECY

Contact: Joy Tsubooka, Public Information Officer
(850) 983-5254, (850) 393- 8304 Cell
joyt@santarosa.fl.gov

Recycling Drop-Off Sites to Close

At the Thursday, April 24 Santa Rosa County Commission Regular Meeting, the board voted to close the county's 21 recycling drop-off sites until further notice due to health and safety risks from the overwhelming volume of recycling material not collected or processed by the county's contractor, West Florida Recycling. Sites will begin closing Friday, April 25. It will take approximately one week to close, clean up and post closure signs at all 21 sites.

The board also discussed West Florida Recycling's performance issues at the Dec. 12, 2013, Jan. 6 and 10, Feb. 23 and 27, and April 7 board meetings. The commission understands the inconvenience removing the drop-off containers places on the residents and their strong desire to have an active recycling program in our county, however the risks caused by uncollected and unprocessed recyclable material must be addressed. The board and staff are diligently working to resolve the issue and ask for understanding as a sustainable, long-term solution is developed.

The timeline of the reopening of the recycling drop-off sites is not fully known at this time. While there are no quick solutions, the county has already taken several steps to solve the long-term issues of collection and processing of recyclable material:

- A request for proposals for alternate recycling contractors was issued on March 1 and closes on May 6.
- Staff were directed to formulate costs of bringing recycling back in-house so that the costs may be compared to contracting the services out to the private sector.
- A request for proposals to franchise garbage collection north of the Yellow River is expected to come before the board in May for advertisement approval. If a franchise agreement is entered into that offers similar services as found in the south end franchise area including residential curbside collection of household garbage, recycling, yard debris and bulky items, the need for recycling drop-off sites will dramatically decrease. A north end solid waste franchise agreement could be in place as soon as Oct. 1.

The county entered into a contract with West Florida Recycling on March 30, 2012 to collect recycling materials from the county's drop-off sites and process all recycling material taken to the Central Landfill located in Milton. The contractor has failed to collect the material from the drop-off sites in a consistent and timely manner and to process the material at the transfer site located at the Central Landfill, leaving it in an unmarketable condition to where the materials had to be disposed in the landfill. Residents have issued complaints about the condition of the drop-off sites which are overrun with raw recyclables that encourage illegal dumping and generate windblown litter on adjacent properties.

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