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Staff Report

Item # 6

To: Lemoore City Council
From: Lauren Apone, Administrative Analyst
Date: August 10, 2009
Subject: Refuse Changes – Six Month Update

Discussion:

In February 2009, the City of Lemoore made some changes to its refuse operations as directed by Council in October 2008. These changes included reducing green waste and recycling collection and street sweeping to every other week.

Staff and Council were concerned that this change would affect participation in the recycling and green waste programs. Below is the total tonnage collected for February to July of 2008, before the program began, and February through July of 2009, the first six months of the alternating week program.

	Green Waste	Refuse	Recycling
Feb-July 2008	2227	2644	898
Feb-July 2009	1943	2657	688

The tonnage of refuse in the black can shows no significant change from the previous year.

The recycling tonnage shows an approximate 23% drop from last year's levels. There are a number of factors that could help explain the decrease in recycling collected in the blue cans. First, residents may be recycling elsewhere. According to Kings Waste and Recycling Authority, the recycling bins at the schools have shown a slight increase since the alternating week program started. Also, when the economy is in a recession, people tend to purchase less consumer goods, which means they dispose of less packaging. Since most packaging is recyclable, including cardboard boxes and plastic containers, it is expected to see a drop in recycling. Also, the poor economy may also mean that more people are returning their bottles and cans for CRV, instead of putting them in the blue can. Although recycling rates in the blue can have dropped, the tonnage for the black can remains unchanged, which indicates that residents are finding other ways to recycle. If recycling rates had dropped and refuse tonnage had increased, it would

mean that people were throwing their recyclables in the black can due to lack of room. This does not appear to be the case.

The green waste tonnage shows an approximate 13% drop from last year's levels. The poor economy may be a factor here as well. The City has also had less demand for water this year, which may indicate that residents may be reducing their landscape watering in order to try to save money. When there is less watering, there is less grass to mow and less green waste to dispose of. Also, our spring clean-up this year collected 86 tons of green waste in May. We do not know the tonnages of green waste for the 2008 spring clean-up, but reports from staff who worked on both clean-ups suggest that there was more green waste this year than last. In the end, although it appears that the green waste tonnage has dropped, it looks like residents are not disposing of it in the black can.

As part of the program, the City offered one extra green and blue can free of charge to residents who needed the extra capacity. As of August 1, 343 extra cans have been requested and delivered, including 202 green cans and 141 blue cans. The number of cans requested is far fewer than was expected.

Budget Impact:

The changes to the refuse operations, both the alternating week recycling and green waste program and the every other week street sweeping, have saved the Refuse Fund a significant amount of money. The following are the real cost savings realized for the first six months of the program as compared to last year's figures and also the anticipated annual savings.

	<u>Six Months</u>	<u>Annual</u>
Fuel*	\$15,146	\$30,292
Vehicle Maintenance	\$11,558	\$23,116
Labor	\$42,005	\$84,010
Asset Replacement**	\$23,888	\$47,776
Total	\$92,597	\$185,194

* Fuel based on \$3.50/gal for diesel to keep consistent with past analysis

** Contribution avoidance into the asset replacement fund within the refuse fund

Recommendation:

Information Only.