

About the City

By Councilman Kingery

I will be talking about our Sanitation/Recycling situation this time. As you know Douglas has several recycling sites around the City for you to use for the recycling of items such as Newspapers, Magazines, Aluminum, Glass and Phone Books. This is a way we can reduce the use of natural resources and cut down on the amount of materials going into our landfill.

We have a growing problem with our efforts to accomplish the recycling process with which we need everyone's help. Recycling is part of our Sanitation system. Our Sanitation system costs the residents about \$364,000 per year to operate. That is about \$90 for each resident, or \$216 per year per family. Re-cycling is a part of this expense. The problem; we have people that are destroying your ability to recycle by contaminating the recycle bins, and at the same time they are adding a lot of unnecessary expense to the Sanitation system.

Let me give you some examples: I gave you the recycling items list above, now I am going to give you examples of what has been deposited recently at the Clay Street recycling center. You will notice the recycle list does not match the deposits! This is quite consistent with the other recycling centers or garbage dumpsters located around our community for your convenience.

Hi, I'm Randi and I live in Douglas so I pay \$18 per month for sanitation. I had some extra things that wouldn't fit into my garbage container and I didn't want to go way out to the landfill and pay another \$6 so I went to the Clay Street recycling place and left a couple cardboard boxes full of items on the ground in front of the "Phone Book Only" dumpster. I spilled some pop cans and an old shoe, but someone is going to have to clean up anyway, so I left it all on the ground.

I'm Brenda and I live in the Chalk Buttes area so even though I don't pay fees I feel like I am a community member. We purchased some new yard furniture and I took the old lounge, cushions and a few bags of trash to the Clay Street recycling center. Usually no one is there so I don't think anyone

saw me leave things leaned up against the dumpster and on the ground around it. Saved \$6 and that isn't much to divide among the 6000+ paying people that live in town.

John here and I live in town so pay fees. We installed a new "john" in the basement and took the box and old "crapper" to the Clay Street recycle place. I cleaned out the garage, filled a dumpster and piled things beside it. Sorry about leaving it on the ground where someone else will have to clean it up, but gosh, I probably saved \$12 and this will give the city crew something to do.

Hi I'm Edwina and I live out in the country and don't pay for garbage pickup so I stopped at the Clay Street recycle place and dumped off my things. The area had been all cleaned up that Monday morning so I hope no one will notice my cardboard shipping box I left beside the dumpster. I was rather surprised that the dumpster was already full of garbage piled on top of the magazines. I saved some money and didn't have to drive all the way to the landfill, even though it was open. Just call me Freda the freeloader!

My name is Penny and yes I filled the dumpster, beside Edwina, labeled "newspapers" with my garbage and an old tire; hid my shipping box under the tire so no one would know it was me. I wouldn't want anyone to think that I would contaminate the recycling so that it had to all be hauled to the landfill; that wouldn't be right. I live in town so it isn't like I am not paying. Maybe the public works guys can separate my garbage from the newspapers. However I really don't care!

Freddie the freeloader is my name and I live out on East Antelope. Had some old mattresses that I needed to get rid of so I just leaned them up against the "Glass" recycling dumpster. I sure didn't want to pay to deposit them in the landfill. It was a little further for me to drive all the way to Clay Street but I try to dump my stuff at various sites so I don't get caught. It is nice to have the city people pay my way.

I'm David and I live in town. I did some tree trimming and took my branches out to the Clay Street recycle place. I know they take them for free at the landfill and they could be made into compost, but there was already so much trash on the ground that I figured it didn't matter. Those

guys have to go there every few days anyway to clean up the mess. A little more won't hurt.

I'm Stephanie and I figured that I could dump off my T.V. at Clay Street recycle place. I dumped it near David's tree trimmings. I know trees and T.V.s don't mix and e-waste goes free to the landfill, but I live on the opposite side of town so figure someone else can take it to the landfill. Heck, maybe someone will think it works and take it home for a try, and then they can haul it out to the landfill. Works for me!

Ted, that's me! I took some items to Clay Street over the weekend. Had a few landscaping timbers that I didn't need anymore. I know they could have been taken to the landfill for free, but I had a few other items for which they probably would have charged me. As long as I can get someone else to pay that is good. I've got enough payments on my new truck and I live 5 miles out, so it costs me enough to just get to Clay Street.

Dorothy here and I live in town, so I pay my way. I had several bags of garbage and I didn't want to pay extra at the landfill, so I dumped them into a Newspaper dumpster. I pretty much filled it up, but if someone wants to recycle newspapers they can dump my garbage on the ground and then recycle their papers. Clay Street is nearer to where I live and everybody else is dumping there, why shouldn't I? The City has a mess to clean up anyway so my stuff won't make a difference. If someone really wants to recycle they might try a different site, but it's not my problem!

Yes it's me, Julie; I don't live in town, however I come in to work in town and I see no reason why I shouldn't fill up the newspaper dumpster with my boxes from my jar lids. I do canning and have no use for the boxes the jars came in. I dumped other large cardboard containers also, but I flattened them so they would fit into the newspaper container. I agree with Dorothy, people that want to recycle newspaper can either clean out my garbage or go somewhere else. What do I care if I have destroyed the ability of others to recycle? I can't waste my time helping save the planet!

Here I am, last but not least, Lenny. We bought a new bed and had to get rid of the old one. Went to Clay Street recycle center and what a mess. Everything piled everywhere! Recycle bins overflowing with everyone's

junk. Guess no one cares about recycling, or that the City crew has to deal with this mess every week, and sometimes more often than that. I hated to make it worse, but what the heck is another mattress and box springs? If I was in charge I would start taking pictures of people and enforcing the \$750 fine for violators. It's time we do something about this.

Now you might think this is fictitious and most of the names are. You figure out who is real and who is fictitious! But the trash is not fictitious; it is all real and actually much worse than this. It was cleaned up Monday morning and by Monday evening it was a mess again. This is happening every week and all over town. Watch Channel 61 and you will be able to see pictures of what I am talking about, or go to City Hall and ask to see the pictures.

These are real people who are stealing from you just as much as if they came to your home and took your things. Would you violators go into Home Town Apparel and take items off the shelf without paying? Would you go to Safeway and take things without paying? Would you want the Douglas citizens to come to your place and dump their garbage around your property or garbage cans?

Sure, there is a difference between the people that live in town and pay for sanitation, and the people that live outside of town and do not pay for the service. There is also a difference between town people that put things in the right place and those that dump stuff on the ground and in the wrong containers. When you contaminate recycle containers with the wrong items you have forced the City to transport the entire contents to the landfill. You have wasted other people's money and efforts to be good citizens and to recycle.

When you come in from outside of town the proper thing is to take your refuse to the landfill where it belongs. We city residents are happy to provide recycling bins for everyone's use, but it is pathetic when you take away the efforts of citizens that are paying for this important part of our community.

Garbage dumpsters in public places are for legitimate visitors to our community and for specific users of public property, such as hikers, picnickers etc. These dumpsters are not for use of city and non-city

residents to use for disposal of their garbage or unwanted items. City code 13.68.020 provides a penalty of up to \$750 for each offence; this includes dumping when you have no authorization and placing items in the wrong containers and on the ground.

The City is looking into installing cameras to monitor these sites and will be prosecuting violators. You could pay a lot of landfill fees instead of a \$750 fine and you will be helping to make our community a better place instead of a Municipality of multiple messy garbage sites. Please take pride in what you are paying for and I encourage you to talk to violators you see. Get their license plate number and vehicle description and where you saw the violation. Turn it in to the City Hall or Police Department. Help stop them from stealing your sanitation/recycling system.

Every time the City employees have to clean up these messes it adds hundreds of dollars expense to the City. We have to pay salaries, equipment expense and landfill fees for depositing the refuse where it should have been in the first place. Sanitation is an Enterprise Fund and must pay its own way. The 6000+ citizens of Douglas pay every time someone cheats the system. Even \$100 per week would be \$5200 per year, but we have multiple sites that we have to clean up and some have to be cleaned several times per week. That means several dollars per year for every Douglas resident, man, woman and child; just because a few choose not to pay their fair share. If there is a side of this I am missing please let me know. If I offended you that is ok; I believe there are another 6000 people that are offended when you steal from us. Each Douglas resident spends about \$90 per year for sanitation and we provide a landfill and recycling facilities you are welcome to use. For a few dollars we will take your refuse at the landfill and bury it for you. That's a promise and a bargain!