

TALKING TRASH

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Solid Waste Management Dept.

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DIRECTOR BUCHANAN RETIRES AFTER 25 YEARS OF CITY SERVICE

Mr. Thomas Buchanan was unanimously approved by City Council on January 17, 2001 to serve as Director of the City of Houston's Solid Waste Management Department where he has oversight of approximately 530 employees. Buchanan, more affectionately known by everyone as "Buck," is a 25-year veteran of the City. On July 31, 2007, he will be retiring.

Mayor White said, "Buck has done a good job preparing us for the (Republic Waste contract) changeover and overall, as your team leader."



this department and for the often thankless service you perform for the citizens of Houston. I'm ready to retire, but I will truly miss all of you. We have faced a lot of challenges and seen a lot of changes in the last 25 years and we have taken over the Republic Waste contract area. It has been extra work but I am proud that you met the task.

We "lost" some of our customers to the private haulers in 1989 and we did not even have an opportunity to try and better their cost. Since that time, and particularly in the last 6 or 7 years, we have really come together as a team; and we demonstrated that we are the most efficient and productive solid waste organization around. We finally took back our customers. I'm happy about it, most of the customers are happy about it, and you should all be happy and proud of your accomplishment.

I was the first Solid Waste Director in Houston who came from within the department. I believe that was because of the great job you do and the dedicated service that you provide, day in and day out. I guess that Mayor Brown believed that it wasn't "broke" so he didn't need to "fix" it with a director from some other city. Harry Hayes will be a director who comes from within the department as well. Looks like Mayor White believes it still isn't "broke".

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Most of you already knew that I was retiring this summer. More than a few of us started working here about the same time. I have never had anything but the highest esteem for the men and women in

MAYOR WHITE NOMINATES HARRY HAYES TO REPLACE DIRECTOR BUCHANAN

Mayor Bill White has asked Harry Hayes, the Deputy Director of the North Operations Division, to succeed Buck as the new Solid Waste Management Director. City Council will be asked to confirm his appointment on August 1, 2007. Harry, as many of you

know, has 14 years of service with the department.

Buck said, "He is delighted that Harry will be someone who is completely knowledgeable about all of the things we have been doing to improve our efficiencies, knows our

customers and knows how to get things done. Thanks to the Mayor for making a decision early enough that Harry and I can work together for a few months before I leave to be sure that we don't have any things left hanging."

"All SWMD staff have done a great job of coordinating, servicing and supporting during this rerouting and contract conversion period."

-Buck-

Welcome to our new Solid Waste employees!

We are happy to have you as a part of the SWMD team!

- JULY NEW HIRES**
- Frenchie Bledsoe (DEP)**
 - Jay Boniaby (NW)**
 - Broderick Buchanan (SW)**
 - Devin D. Doyle (SW)**
 - Patricio Gonzales (SE)**
 - Johnathon Johnson (NW)**
 - Auden Hosea (SW)**
 - Thomas Lockett (DEP)**
 - Jorge Martinez (SW)**
 - Donald McGowen (DEP)**
 - Alton Mounts (NE)**
 - Joseph Rowe (DEP)**
 - William Williams (SW)**

WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING THE CITY TOGETHER

On July 2nd, the City of Houston converted the areas that were previously serviced under contract with Republic Waste to direct service by the City's Solid Waste Management Department. To incorporate these new customers most efficiently, the bounda-

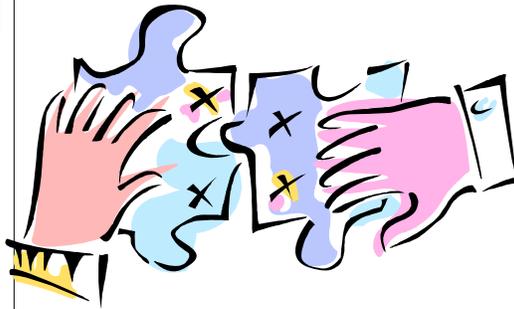
ries of the SWMD service centers have changed and the entire City will be rerouted to optimize efficiency and reduce cost.

In order to take maximum advantage of the route optimization, some customers experienced a service day

change for their automated garbage and yard trimmings. There were no changes to curbside recycling and heavy trash collection days. The SWMD utilized a number of tools to get

the word out: water bill messages, radio announcements on 18 radio stations, Houston Chronicle news stories, City Savvy newsletter article, interviews on TV and radio stations, phone bank, 2 letters and postcards to affected citizens, yard signs, on hold messages on the City phone lines and 3-1-1.

Although numerous avenues have been taken to notify the public, there were some individuals who stated that they did not know of the change. Buck said, "All SWMD staff have done a great job of coordinating, servicing and supporting during this rerouting and contract conversion period."



NORTHWEST (WINDFERN) DEPOSITORY REOPENS AUGUST 1, 2007

Neighborhood Depositories are locations where Houston residents may dispose of their heavy trash outside of their scheduled collection day. Currently, the department has three neighborhood depository locations:

Northeast Area
5565 Kirkpatrick
713-675-3208

Southeast Area
9200 Lawndale
713-926-1247

South Area
5100 Sunbeam
713-738-1936

Northwest Area (open August)
6023 Windfern
713-895-1003

The Mayor's Solid Waste Task Force made the recommendation to re-open the Northwest (Windfern Depository). This site will re-open in August. The hours of operation will be the same as the other depositories.

All Depositories are open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

NUTS AND BOLTS

The route conversion and acquisition of the contract area took many hands to make it a success. Often the ones who are behind the scenes are overlooked. Special thanks to our Human Resources section for the facilitation of the massive hiring and training of all the new employees. The team of folks assigned to creating and editing the maps are to be congratulated as well. The



wheels would not have been turning on our trucks had it not been for the tireless efforts of our Fleet and Maintenance Division. They oversaw

the purchases of new trucks and installation of the new radios and GPS systems.

The Rerouting Committee, headed by Terry Swinney, worked together to get input from every department area to facilitate the change. A big round of applause goes to these employees, as well as to the drivers who had to learn the new routes and equipment.

Hat's off on a job well done!

CONVERSION SUCCESSFUL, NOW WE'RE TWEAKING FOR SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY

When asked a question from the Houston Chronicle, Director Buchanan informed them that the conversion has been quite good. We only had challenges with 2-3% of the approximately 400,000 customers we service.

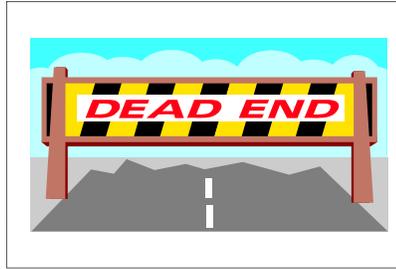
Now that we have gotten through the first couple of weeks of the transition, the department's focus will be tweaking the routes for safety and efficiency.

One of the ways that this will be done will be to change the way we collect garbage on dead end streets and cross streets. In the past, citizens could place their garbage

cans anywhere on the right-of-way for collection.

On May 16, 2007, City Council revised Chapter 39 of the Code of Ordinances granting the Director the authority to tell residents where to place their can for collection for efficiency reasons. In the next few weeks, addresses will be obtained from drivers so that letters can be sent to citizens to officially notify them where to place their cans.

Also, our department is working with the Public Works and Engineering Department to obtain "No Parking Signs" in areas that are congested



with vehicles that block us from servicing the cans.

Another big change to Chapter 39 is that the department will only collect eight (8) cubic yards of heavy trash per household per month. This was determined to be a reasonable amount to be set at the curb for collection.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 2-Calvin Justice (NE)
- 2-Cecil Edwards (NW)
- 3-Rickey Sneed (NE)
- 3-Ralph Stevens (NE)
- 4-Wesley Oaks (NE)
- 4-Richard Moses (NE)
- 4-Shad Watson (SW)
- 5-Nguyen Trinh (SW)
- 6-Anthony Senegal, Jr. (SW)
- 7-E.L. Pleasant, Jr. (SW)
- 8-Daryl Daniels (NW)
- 8-Jessica Thompson (WALKER)
- 9-Tyrone Polk (SW)
- 10-Daryl Pinson (NE)
- 11-Annette Booker (WALKER)
- 11-Larry Smith (NW)
- 11-Esli Gonzalez (NE)
- 12-Joshua Murphy (NE)
- 13-Joel Ramirez (SE)
- 13-Henry McNeese (NW)
- 14-Carol Wyatt (WALKER)
- 15-Beverly Benning (NE)
- 16-Carol Hill (WALKER)
- 16-Dameta Fields (NE)
- 17-Darriel Lovings (NE)
- 17-Gary Clark (SE)
- 17-Chastity Ringo (WALKER)
- 18-Louis Martin, Jr. (NE)
- 18-Donald McGowan (DEP)
- 18-Elgin Perkins (WALKER)
- 19-Thaddeus Reed (SE)
- 19-Eddie McBride (SW)
- 20-Vernon Black II (SW)
- 20-Johnathon Johnson (NW)
- 21-Jose Mendiola (NW)
- 22-Mercedes Garza (SE)
- 22-Felix Harvey (NE)
- 23-Clarence Lenton (SW)
- 25-Ramon Winston (NE)
- 25-Michael Ward (SW)
- 25-Rosalind Smith (SW)
- 25-Charlotte Williams (NE)
- 25-Louis Coleman (SW)
- 26-Tyreece Ceaser (SW)
- 27-Frank Brown (NW)
- 27-Allen Watson (NW)
- 30-Lionel Jack (DEP)
- 30-Juan Monjaras (NW)
- 31-Kenneth Anderson (SE)
- 31-Roy Fitzpatrick (NW)
- 31-David Garcia III (NW)

"HE'S TAKING THE PLUNGE" SURPRISE PARTY AT THE DOWNTOWN AQUARIUM'S DIVE

Buck's getting ready to plunge into retirement. Anyone who has been around Buck has heard him counting down the days. We're sending him off "into the deep" with a going away party.

All Solid Waste Management Department employees are invited to Buck's retirement party at The Downtown

Aquarium, 410 Bagby, in The Dive on Friday, July 27, 2007 from 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.

You can e-mail Buck your well wishes on our SWMD website at

www.houstonolidwaste.org.



KUDOS TO OUR WINNERS

EMPLOYEE OF THE 4TH QUARTER WINNERS

Darren Gentle
Supervisor

Latrice House
Office Services

Leo Williams
Class B

Oscar Garza
Skilled Craft



State ROAD-E-O Winners

Jesse Vaughn

1st Place - Mechanic

Telford Birmingham

1st Place - Roll-off

Both will be competing in the Solid Waste Association of North America's International Road-e-o which will take place September 29, 2007 in New Jersey.

Solid Waste Management
Department

611 Walker, 12th floor
Houston, Texas 77002

City's Customer Service Hotline 3-1-1 or
713-837-0311

We're on the web!
www.houstonsolidwaste.org



JULY RETIREE
Phyllis Walker
(19 years)

TRIVIA

Did you know? The curbside recycling program began as a pilot program in 23 neighborhoods in 1990 and has grown to 162,000 homes.



SAFETY CORNER

Solid Waste employees are always seen wearing safety vests. Why? Safety vests provide a very necessary personal protection for workers who are operating in a variety of locations where the need to be seen is apparent. Safety vests are often used in roadside locations where oncoming traffic presents a danger to the workers. Our accident statistics indicate that drivers often see the trash trucks and still opt to try to squeeze around them. If a worker is outside of the truck, his best defense is to make sure he can be seen from all angles.

Solid Waste employees often perform high-risk operations adjacent to quickly moving traffic or other potentially hazardous situations. Wearing a safety vest is necessary for the wearer to be identified as a person.

Safety vests also increase the visibility against a cluttered background, making them useful for indoor operations such as warehouses and vehicle maintenance shops. The blind spots on many Solid Waste vehicles make it extremely difficult to see workers around the sides of the truck, such as in the shops.

The reflection of the vest make it useful so the worker can give his full attention to the task and not become a moving target for a heavy vehicle or any vehicle.

SAFETY VESTS ARE FOR YOUR WELL BEING!!!

RECYCLING

Houston Mayor Bill White and City Council announced the four winners of the Go Green Houston Recycling Program to promote Houston's vision of "Making Houston a Model Environmental City". In June 2006, Mayor Bill White announced the Go Green Competition to promote his environmental plan and vision to increase recycling initiatives in the areas of participation and tonnage for the neighborhoods that received curbside recycling services.

The four Go Green Houston winners are:

- The most improved paper recycling area - **Braesmont**
- The overall highest paper scoring area - **Meyerland**
- The most improved commingled area (paper and

plastics) final score - **Ashford Hollow**

-The highest overall commingled (paper and plastics) areas: - **Shepherd Park Plaza**

Each winner will receive



\$5,000 towards a project in their community.

"We applaud Houston's neighborhoods and I am confident that the commit-

ment will continue throughout our great city," said Mayor Bill White. "This competition aims to increase the public's awareness of the importance of recycling."

"Although the competition has ended," said Thomas Buchanan, Director of the Solid Waste Department, "We are still encouraging Houstonians to continue recycling by participating in the curbside program or by utilizing the drop off sites throughout the city".

To keep the Go Green Houston momentum going, Wanda Adams and Christine Conner go out to civic clubs and schools to educate them about the importance of recycling. They often take SWMD's new green recycling bin mascot, "Reusette Wisely," (see photo) to bring visual attention to recycling.