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News Release

Ark City, Winfield announce slight changes to recycling program

Cardboard no longer accepted at Central Shop; all recycling at Strother Field

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (August 21, 2020) — The City of Arkansas City and City of Winfield are beginning to implement slight changes to the recycling programs in each community beginning this week.

For both communities, the shared Arkansas City/Winfield Recycling Operations Center, located at 7th Avenue and D Street in Strother Field, remains open for community drive-through drop-off from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. *(It will be closed Sept. 4-5, Nov. 27-28 and Dec. 25-26 for holidays.)*

Due to contamination, though, there no longer is a publicly accessible recycling trailer in Ark City.

Residents **must** have all of their recyclables sorted before coming to the recycling center, in order to help to keep the flow of traffic moving efficiently. The public is responsible for unloading their own vehicles and placing the proper recycling materials in the designated labeled containers. City staff will be on site to answer any questions and assist with unloading, if needed.

ONLY clean, dry and sorted materials will be accepted at the center in the following categories:

- **Combined (#1 and #2) plastic bottles and containers** — including milk jugs, soda bottles, some food trays, laundry detergent containers, etc. **NO PLASTIC BOTTLE CAPS!**
- **Combined (#3, #4, #5, #6 and #7) plastic bottles and containers** — including some food trays, spray bottles, butter tubs & lids, medicine bottles, etc. **NO PLASTIC BOTTLE CAPS!**
- **Aluminum cans** — including soda and beer cans, etc.
- **Steel and tin cans** — including soup and vegetable cans, etc.
- **Mixed paper** — including newspapers, magazines, catalogs, hardcover and softcover books, phonebooks, junk mail, shredded paper (**put in paper bag first!**), office paper, etc.
- **Paperboard** — including cereal boxes, soda and beer boxes, packing paper, paperboard egg cartons only (**NO STYROFOAM**), paper bags, etc.
- **Corrugated cardboard** — including shipping boxes, pizza boxes (**free of food and grease**), moving boxes, etc.

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- **Glass bottles, jugs and jars** (any color) — **NO LIDS!**

Unsorted/contaminated materials (food residues, yard waste, plastic bags, etc.) will **not** be accepted:

- **ABSOLUTELY NO PLASTIC BAGS!** — trash bags, grocery bags, cat or dog food bags, water bottle plastic wrap, etc.
- **ABSOLUTELY NO STYROFOAM!** — Styrofoam cups, Styrofoam food containers, Styrofoam packing peanuts, etc.
- **ABSOLUTELY NO CAPS OR INSERTS!** — plastic bottle caps, drinking straws, plastic spray bottle pumps, etc.

Cost reductions and usage statistics

These changes to the local recycling program are in response to changing global recycling markets.

In 2018, China's regulations regarding contamination of the materials were strengthened to a point that materials from the U.S. simply could not meet the standards anymore.

With no market, the costs to process, store and market materials skyrocketed across the country.

The current recycling plan is designed to focus primarily on the highest volume of material by weight (corrugated cardboard) and combine it with clean, dry, and sorted materials to reduce these costs.

By accepting the materials sorted only, the two cities have the flexibility to capitalize on markets as they change in the future.

Annual shared materials costs for Arkansas City and Winfield rose from approximately \$700 in 2017 to \$225,000 in 2019.

In the first three months of this new program, though, mixed single-stream recycling from the two cities has been reduced from \$121 a ton to \$100 a ton, thanks to the reduction in contaminated materials.

A freight charge of \$475 per load is now being rebated at a rate of \$15 per ton, up from \$10 a ton prior to June, thanks to the two cities' corrugated cardboard recycling efforts.

While the average contamination rate for corrugated cardboard is 65 to 75 percent, the two cities can proudly report they are shipping out corrugated cardboard that is 90 to 95 percent clean.

Fridays at the Recycling Operations Center have averaged around 70 vehicles per day since June 1, while Saturdays have seen an average of 100 vehicles utilize the service.

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