

Franchise Solid Waste Collection

New services for unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

The County of Los Angeles (CA) Department of Public Works has developed a new solid waste collection system for residents of the county's unincorporated communities. The new franchise system replaces an open-market system to establish quality service and promote cleaner neighborhoods through recycling, environmental workshops, bulky item pick-ups, and annual clean-up events. The county has been working with the waste hauling industry for over seven years to develop the franchise system.

Previously, solid waste collection services were provided through an open-market system in which each resident directly arranged for services with the hauler. Although many of the waste haulers did a good job, this system was unable to meet demands created by changes in federal and state laws, public attitudes toward protecting the environment, and consumer demands for better services and protection against excessive rate increases.

The new franchise system is expected to provide residents with ways to dispose of solid waste in an environmentally friendly way. Haulers selected to provide solid waste collection services are required to enter into a franchise agreement with the county based on specific terms and conditions. The agreements are based on the services expressed by the community and are designed to improve customer service, increase accountability, promote cleaner neighborhoods, and regulate rates charged by haulers. The franchise waste collection system will also provide the county with tools for enforcement.

The franchise system is designed to provide uniform service standards for

haulers operating in each franchise area. The system provides each community with the flexibility needed to create services that will benefit area residents. These features are modified to reflect feedback that was received through survey cards, community meetings, and telephone calls. This interactive process allowed the county to tailor each agreement to meet the needs voiced by each community. The franchise system also benefits the community by limiting the wear and tear on county streets, assists the county in meeting the state's waste reduction mandate, and reduces the need for new landfills.

Selection Process

Franchise waste haulers were selected through a competitive process. All permitted waste haulers operating in the county were asked to submit proposals for consideration. Criteria for selecting the best qualified waste hauler included price, work plan, financial resources, references, experience, environmental record, and procurement and/or contract/agreement disputes. A committee reviewed the proposals and assigned a score for each criteria. The waste hauler that received the highest overall score was awarded the franchise.

Franchise waste haulers may request annual rate adjustments, but must justify the need for the rate adjustment based on changes to the consumer price index, producer price index, changes in environmental laws, or increased landfill disposal costs. Any rate adjustments will be subject to the limits specified in the franchise agreements. The term of the franchise agreements is seven years.

Initially, residents received three 96-gal containers—one for trash, one for recyclable materials, and one for green

waste. One additional green waste container and one recyclable container were available at no charge upon request. Additional containers are available at a cost of \$5 per container per month. Smaller containers are also available upon request.

The county began implementing the franchise solid waste collection system in six unincorporated areas in January 2007 in La Crescenta, Bassett/Valinda/South San Jose Hills, South San Gabriel, and West Whittier followed in April 2007. Citrus and Rowland Heights will begin the system in July 2007. The main features of the franchise solid waste collection system include:

- Automated once a week separate collection of refuse, green waste, and recyclables.
- Two bulky item curbside collections per year in unlimited amounts (includes electronic waste).
- Two excess green waste curbside collections in bags without surcharge.
- Annual curbside clean-up events in unlimited amounts (includes electronic waste).
- Four community clean-up projects.
- Roll out service at no extra cost for residents who are 65 years or older and/or disabled.
- 25 percent off the basic rate for residents who are 65 years or older, head of household, and qualify for a utility discount based on financial need.
- New and innovative recycling programs, such as a school recycling pilot program, additional household hazardous waste round-up events,

and universal and electronic waste collection events.

Allied Waste Services signed an agreement with the county to provide exclusive waste disposal and recycling services to the residents of La Crescenta at the monthly rate of \$25.94. The senior discount will be \$19.45. Here are the plans for the other five unincorporated areas in the first phase of the franchise collection system.

BASSETT/VALINDA/SOUTH SAN JOSE HILLS FRANCHISE AREA. Valley Vista Services signed an agreement with the county to provide exclusive waste disposal and recycling services to residents at the monthly rate of \$23.54. The senior discount will be \$17.66.

SOUTH SAN GABRIEL FRANCHISE AREA. Athens Services has agreed with the county to collect solid waste and provide recycling services at the monthly rate of \$22.10. The senior discount will be \$16.57.

WEST WHITTIER FRANCHISE AREA. Universal Waste System will collect solid waste and provide recycling services for \$15.99 a month. The senior discount rate is \$11.99.

CITRUS FRANCHISE AREA. To be determined.

ROWLAND HEIGHTS FRANCHISE AREA. Beginning in July 2007, United Pacific Waste will charge \$17.62 a month to collect solid waste and provide recycling services. The senior discount will be \$13.23.

Upon full implementation of the first six franchise areas, the county will pursue franchise solid waste collection in the San Gabriel Valley and East County area (Altadena/Kinneola Mesa, East Charter Oak/East Ramona, East Pasadena/East San Gabriel/ East Arcadia/Royal Oaks, Hacienda Heights, South Whittier, and Avocado Heights) followed by Antelope Valley (Agua Dulce/Acton, Desert, Gorman/ Neenach/Del Sur/Green Valley/Leona Valley/Quartz Hill, Littlerock, Sun Village/Pearblossom/Wilsons/Llano, and Santa Clarita Valley). When the franchise system is fully implemented throughout the county, over two-thirds or about 750,000 residents of the unincorporated county areas will be serviced by franchising. 