News Release

Plastic grocery bags now accepted by City recycler

MURPHY (October 28, 2013) A growing movement among cities across the country pits the use and convenience of plastic grocery bags against the environmental costs that accompany the use of these bags, nudging local waste and recycling providers to find solutions, according to Customer Service Manager Candy McQuiston.

"There is no question that with convenience come consequences. These bags are free to consumers, but in the long run, they may impose tremendous costs, including litter pickup, landfill costs, and the impact on plants and animals. Reversing the negative impact of these bags may have incredible costs that we have yet to calculate," she said.

Recently, the City's waste and recycling contractor, Progressive Waste Solutions announced a change in policy that addresses that issue. Murphy residents may now include clean, empty plastic grocery bags in their recycling bins. This also means that recycling material can be collected in plastic garbage bags. This prevents dispersal during pickup.

"This is a relatively new change for Progressive, since the bags offered a bit of a challenge to recyclers. The contractor's recycling facility is undergoing a few slight modifications to accept and isolate the bags. As these changes take place, it will be easier and less costly to process the bags. The bottom line for residents, though, is that the bags will be accepted, with no impact on the cost of the service," she added.

National refuse data indicates that approximately 80 percent of grocery bags are sent directly to area landfills because consumers have become accustomed to placing them in trash bins. As a result, several large and small municipalities have passed bans on plastic bags from local retailers. In Texas, cities like Brownsville, Fort Stockton, Austin and South Padre Island have passed such ordinances, and the City of Dallas has been considering following suit.

These bans, while reducing litter and encouraging the use of bags made of canvas, cloth and other durable material, also limit the amount of material that can be recycled. Progressive Waste Solutions has entered into contracts with several vendors that will accept the grocery bags and recycle them into other products.

Currently, the City of Murphy is not contemplating a ban on the bags, but is encouraging residents to place these bags in the blue recycling poly bins.

"For grocery bag recycling, we're asking residents to ensure the bags are clean and dry, emptied of receipts, coupons or other paper trash. And, of course, plastic grocery bags that have been used to hold hazardous material, such as medical waste, fertilizer, and other household hazardous waste should not be recycled. Plastic or cellophane food packaging, such as meat wrappings, Ziploc bags, wrappers or other plastic packaging items should not be placed in the recycling bin," said McQuiston.

Questions concerning the recycling of plastic grocery bags should be directed to Progressive Waste Solutions at (469) 452-8000 or via e-mail at murphy@progressivewaste.com.

ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. Determined to maintain a country living ambiance, city planners strive to preserve that feel while still exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. The centrally-located municipal complex includes four buildings that house Fire, Police, City Administration and Public Works. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities.