



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Beaufort expands free pickup of yard debris, bulk goods through Waste Pro solid waste contract

Helping Beaufort residents clear yard debris or remove bulky items such as washing machines or abandoned sofas is more than good customer service – it's a good safety practice, said Beaufort City Manager Scott Dadson.

When leaves and branches pile up on a property, or when unused and tattered furniture and other bulky goods are left in carports, they provide ready fuel for fires. Should a house start burning, firefighters must battle the original fire plus fight back the flames from the newly fueled areas.

Under the City's solid waste removal contract with Waste Pro, in effect since August 2009, the City has focused on four key areas to improve life for residents, to improve the looks of the City, and to improve fire safety issues:

- Garbage
- Recycling
- Yard debris
- Bulk goods.

"Our goal is to make it easy, convenient and affordable for City residents to do the right thing, whether that's get their household garbage removed or recycling their bottles and paper, or helping take away grass trimmings or branches or broken washing machines that otherwise are eyesores and safety hazards," said Mack Cook, comptroller for the City of Beaufort.

“It’s all about customer service and helping make this a better community, starting with individual residents and their homes,” he said.

Garbage

City residents are issued a 95-gallon rolling cart for household garbage, and pick-up is once weekly Monday through Friday except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. Waste Pro dumps the garbage at Hickory Hill Landfill.

If a resident has a problem moving the container to the curb, he or she can be added to a “waiver list” or “handicapped list” by calling Waste Pro at 645-4100. Then, a Waste Pro worker will move the container to the truck, empty it and return it to the resident’s home, for free, Cook said.

“We recognize we have an older population and some people with medical or physical conditions that make it challenging to carry a 95-gallon cart filled with trash out to the curb,” Cook said. “We are here to help.”

Recycling

To clear up the confusion right away: The Waste Pro recycling truck is the same blue color as the garbage truck, and yes, the workers do toss all the recyclables together into the back of the truck. The key difference is that the materials are taken to Savannah Recycling where they are sorted and then recycled.

The city recycles glass bottles, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, newspaper and cardboard.

Under a previous recycling effort, workers separated the items at curbside, which took a lot of time. The new approach is more efficient, which means Waste Pro can serve more residents, Cook said. Participation on the City recycling effort has grown, he said, from about 30 percent to 40 percent in less than one year.

Yard debris

Ten bags or less of yard debris – typically grass clippings or bagged leaves – will be picked up on regular garbage days if the bags are heavyweight yard bags, twisted or tied closed, Cook said. There’s a better, “greener” option, though, he said.

When there’s more than 10 bags of yard debris, or branches that need removed, pick-up is done on Thursdays and Fridays using a special truck. A resident can ensure pick up of large quantities of bags or branches before the weekend by placing these items out before Thursday and calling Waste Pro at 645-4100 and requesting a pick up.

Yard debris is taken to a special soil reclamation center operated by Waste Pro where the leaves, grass and branches are burned, then mixed with soil to create compost – which in turn is used by The Greenery to improve landscaping on City property. To help facilitate efficiencies in collecting yard debris and limit fire hazards, citizens are still required to bag leaves and are discouraged from placing large piles of leaves along the streets.

“The City is trying not to put everything in the landfill,” Cook said. “We want more recycling, including turning yard debris to compost. To do this, we need the help of our community. It’s an easy system we have and we hope more people will take advantage of it.”

Bulk goods

With help from City staff, residents can have “white goods” such as washing machines and refrigerators removed from their property, along with unused furniture and other heavy, cumbersome items.

“We have cleared generations of trash out of Beaufort’s back yards, more than 200 tons of it, in just six months,” Cook said. “Not only does that make the place look better and improve property values, but it also makes these homes safer if a fire should ever start.”

Bulk good pick-up is done mostly on Saturdays, on an on-call basis. Residents needing the service should call Waste Pro at 645-4100 or visit the City website at www.cityofbeaufort.org for a link to request pick-up.

Under the previous bulk good pick-up system in Beaufort, residents had to physically visit City Hall, fill out paperwork and pay \$25. Then, a large dumpster would be brought to the resident’s home – but the resident had to be able to load their items into the dumpster, Cook said.

The new service, run through Waste Pro, is free to City residents. If they need help moving heavy items to the curb for pick up, they should call the Beaufort Fire Department at 525-7055.

“Our firefighters are happy to help carry bulky items to the curb, because they would rather remove debris from a house during the day and when it’s not on fire, than go into that burning house at night when all the debris is on fire,” Beaufort Fire Chief Sammy Negron said.

At the same time the firefighters move items to the curb for the resident, they’ll also help the residents with fire planning, including checking smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and reviewing a fire exit plan.

Another big help in clearing lots and removing bulky items from back yards has been the Neighborhood Associations, Cook said.

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