

The Capital Times, Madison

New trash cart pickup starts Monday

[Bill Novak](#) — 9/06/2007 10:46 am

Let's roll!

Madison's new automated trash cart collection system rolls out Monday morning, with big blue trucks picking up 67,000 tan trash carts rolled to the curb or alley every week by cart-happy Madisonians, the trash carts standing side by side (at least four feet apart please) next to the forest green recycling carts used for the past two years.

City officials and EnAct, an environmental group, are conducting separate events today trumpeting the trash cart program, and to give ideas to homeowners on what to do with their old garbage cans.

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz and city recycling coordinator George Dreckmann came up with a "top 10 list" of everything we should know about the automated collection program that starts Sept. 10, while EnAct has creative ways of transforming old garbage cans into useful things such as rain barrels or potato growers.

"The new automated refuse collection system will be a major step forward for our city," Cieslewicz said today. "The program will reduce labor costs by over \$150,000 in 2008, and, coupled with savings from the recycling automated collection, will save taxpayers over \$600,000 annually."

Trash carts were still being delivered this week with about 2,000 left to go, mostly on the isthmus.

Dreckmann said some individuals or sides of streets were missed in the city, so if you didn't get your cart and your neighbors have theirs, call 246-4532 if you live on the east side or 266-4681 if you live on the west side, give your address and the city will get a cart to you before pickup starts next week.

Pickup days will not change with the cart system. and residents won't be able to change the size of trash cart at this time, having to wait at least until the beginning of 2008 before the city will be able to make any cart adjustments.

If the trash cart delivered is too small, the city will allow purchase of additional carts, \$50 for the large 95-gallon cart, \$45 for the medium 65-gallon cart and \$40 for the small 35-gallon cart.

Some residents jumped the gun and have fully-loaded trash carts at curbside already. They won't be picked up until next week, and people who don't use the tan carts for their

garbage next week and put bags of garbage on the curb will find those bags still sitting at the curb after the big blue trucks roll by.

If you have more garbage than will fit into the tan cart, you'll have to hold the extra until the next week, or ask a neighbor if you can put your extra plastic bags of trash into their carts.

All garbage in the trash carts must be bagged; single items such as old lumber, small furniture and the like can be put into the carts, but no microwaves, TVs, fluorescent bulbs, computers should be included.

Other items not for the trash carts include yard waste, hazardous or infectious waste, large amounts of remodeling waste, explosives/ammunition, pet poop, paint, waste oil, or anything else that should be recycled.

What to do with the old trash cans?

EnAct coordinator Nicole Craig said an estimated 30,000 metal or plastic trash cans won't be needed when the carts start to roll Monday, so instead of making the old trash cans part of the trash, they could be turned into a variety of usable things, or the cans can be given to others through the [Madison Stuff Exchange](#).

"We know of an apartment building owner who is offering 36 trash cans on the exchange," Craig said. "You can post your can on the exchange, or if you live in a community that still uses trash cans, you can acquire a can through the exchange."

EnAct's website (enactwi.org) has reuse ideas, including turning the old can into a composter, make it a rain barrel, use the can for lawn and garden tool storage, or grow potatoes. Clean the can first before using it for something else.

EnAct program manager Kevin Coleman said the organization has about 600 people who've been on environmental action teams in neighborhoods, community organizations and the workplace, teaching the citizenry how to recycle and conserve.

"Our focus is on the individual," Coleman said.

The goal is to reduce how much solid waste goes into the trash, Craig said.

"We produce 4 1/2 pounds of waste per person per day," she said. "Through our actions we can show you how to reduce waste by 180 pounds a year."

For those who don't want to turn their old cans into potato growers or donate to others, the city is collecting old plastic trash cans at drop-off sites at 1501 W. Badger Road on the south side, 4602 Sycamore Road on the east side and 402 S. Point Road on the west side until Oct. 12.

Old metal trash cans can be included in the curbside large item collection, but put a note that says "please recycle" on the can so the crews know to pick it up. Old trash cans should not be put into recycling carts.

Disabled residents who need help getting their carts to the curb can call the city recycling office at 267-2626 to apply for the residential roll out service, or get an application online (cityofmadison.com/streets/automateddisabled.cfm).

Dreckmann said rolling out 67,000 trash carts at one time is an ambitious undertaking.

"Normally, a program this big would be in two or three segments," Dreckmann said. "This is an unusually large number of carts to roll out at one time, but we did it with the recycling carts and it worked."

About 2,000 more trash carts are being distributed than the number of recycling carts two years ago, thanks to the growth of the city over the past two years.