

Local News

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COUNTY

Recycling thoughts on trash and cash

In light of cost issues, commissioner studying possibility of a materials recovery center here

BY JEFF TUCKER
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Recycling might save the county government money in its trash disposal costs, but there's a question right now over whether it's making any money for the local haulers.

Becky Cortese, owner of C&C Disposal, said last week that her company didn't get into recycling for the profit.

"It was not a good business opportunity," Cortese said. "But I'm an ex-high school biology teacher and I know it's what we need to do."

C&C Disposal started its curbside, single-stream recycling program in

2009, offering its customers the opportunity to dispose of their plastics, paper and cardboard into one bin and have C&C haul it off from their driveway every two weeks.

The company also collects recyclables from the community at its drop-off center.

But the route the material takes from there may explain why implementing a curbside recycling program can be difficult and why Commissioner Terry Hart has been working on trying to get a materials recovery center in Pueblo County.

"We have to haul our single-stream recycling to a sorting facility," Cortese



Terry Hart

said. "There's one open in Colorado Springs but we pretty much take it to wherever we can get the best deal."

Cortese said at one time, the sorting facilities



Becky Cortese

would pay out a stipend that might cover the company's fuel costs, but lately that's not been the case.

Cortese said eventually the recycled materials are sold off to processing

sites in China. But a recent dockworkers' strike along the West Coast has created a backlog of material, forcing down the prices brokers will pay for it.

Since plastics are petroleum products, the recent drop in oil process made it cheaper to make new plastic items rather than create something from older material, driving the price for plastics down even further.

That may have changed as oil prices have gone up, but Cortese notes that's a double-edged sword since her transportation costs are going up as well.

The county has been working over these issues for a few years now. Hart said the examination of

a recovery facility here began with a grant from the governor's energy office several years ago to develop energy efficiency and sustainability plans.

Hart said that when he took office in January 2013, he started looking at the plans to see what could be implemented and landed on the issue of recycling.

"What we've been doing is trying to work with various efforts going on in the city, many have not been successful, to see what the best way is to encourage recycling in the community to capture savings but also create jobs," Hart said. "And that's where this concept

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EILERS AREA

Residents want property tax cut

Milewide Superfund study zone also touches Bessemer, the Grove

BY PETER ROPER
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

There are roughly 1,900 property owners in the Eilers neighborhood Superfund study zone and some are starting a petition drive to get their Pueblo County property taxes cut in half.

David Webb, of the Eilers Heights Neighborhood Association, claims that property owners have no choice.

Webb, a real estate agent, said there is no sign any banks or mortgage lenders are doing real estate deals in the South Side study area, so that limits property owners to cash sales only.

And cash sales are typically for 51 to 53 percent less than a financed sale, he said Wednesday.

"If that's the case, we believe all the properties in that study zone should be eligible for a 51 percent cut in property taxes," Webb said.

May is protest month at the county assessor's office, when taxpayers can challenge their valuations and taxes. Assessor Frank Beltran said he's talked with the Eilers group and will consider any protest that contains the taxpayer's name, signature and parcel numbers.

"If there are protests filed, we'll look at them," he said. "And there could be a lot of them in this case."

Webb said interested property owners can sign the tax petition at Miketa's Floor Covering, 1200 S. Santa Fe Ave. The



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FRANK BELTRAN
ASSESSOR

tax protest period ends May 29.

The Eilers zone was put on the national Superfund list last December based on soil tests that showed some yards had high levels of lead or arsenic contamination.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency linked the contamination to the old Colorado Smelter site in the neighborhood, which smelted silver but closed nearly a century ago.

The study area is a milewide circle that is anchored by the Eilers neighborhood, which is just east of Interstate 25 on Mesa Avenue.

But the full circle goes east to School Street, west to Cedar Street in Bessemer, north to the Grove neighborhood and south to Baystate Avenue.

Webb argues that's a much larger zone than most South Side residents realize and those properties could all be affected as the EPA determines the exact size of the cleanup area.

EPA contractors will be doing soil sampling in the area over the next two years to identify contaminated yards and properties.

proper@chieftain.com



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN

Pueblo West High School graduating senior Christine Post, 18, stands near the Garden of Life in front of the school Wednesday.

CLASS OF 2015

Quest for a 'better life'

Pueblo West High grad ready to put difficult childhood behind her

BY GAYLE PEREZ
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

GRADUATION SCHEDULE

May 21: Pueblo West High School, 7 p.m., Southwest Motors Events Center at Colorado State Fairgrounds

May 22: Swallows Charter Academy, 5 p.m. Pueblo Community College; Rye High, 7 p.m. Rye school gymnasium; East, 7 p.m., Southwest Motors Events Center

May 23: Centennial, 8 a.m. Southwest Motors Events Center; Pueblo County, 8:30 a.m., Hornet Stadium; Central, 12:30 p.m., Southwest Motors Events Center;

South, 5 p.m., Southwest Motors Events Center
May 28: Dolores Huerta Preparatory Academy, 7 p.m. Memorial Hall

Pueblo West High School senior Christine Post is feeling like most soon-to-be-graduates these days.

She's looking forward to earning her diploma, saying goodbye to high school and moving on to a new chapter in her life.

But unlike most seniors, Post, 18, is not yearning for that first taste of independence and life away from mom and dad.

She's pretty much been independent since she was in the fourth grade when she was forced to take on the duties of caring for herself and her younger autistic brother.

"I'm not looking forward to being out on my own because I've pretty much already done that. I'm looking forward to starting a new life," said Post, who will attend the University of Nevada-Las Vegas in the

fall. I'm ready to finally get past the life I had as a child and get a new start in a new place. I haven't had an ideal life, but I'm still here and I'm here for a reason and I plan to make the most of it . . ."

The diploma Post will receive when she graduates with the Pueblo West Class of 2015 is a testament to the teenager's strong desire to break from a childhood riddled with her mother's addiction, poverty and neglect.

"I didn't have anything as a kid. My mom was a bad role model. She smoked

cigarettes, she was overweight, she did drugs, she liked alcohol and that's what she spent all the money on," said Post. "She doesn't even know who my father is."

Post said her mother's lifestyle wreaked havoc on the family as they were forced to live in destitute conditions with trash piled in the house to sometimes being without water and heat because bills were not paid.

"I remember going to the Boys and Girls Club after school where I'd enter any contest they were having

just so I could try to win a gift card," she said. "When I'd win one, I'd go to Safeway and buy food for me and my brother."

In the evening, Post said she'd help her brother with his homework, cook dinner and do the dishes.

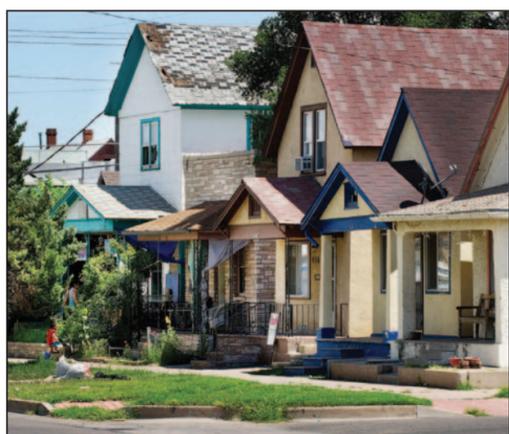
"Then I'd have to wake up at 4:30 or 5 a.m. and do a paper route."

When she was in fourth grade, Post said she experienced the bitter divorce between her mom and stepdad that threw her world into a wild spin but gave her a new outlook on life.

"My grandparents ended up fighting for custody and they got me and my brother. That's when I moved to Pueblo West," she said. "We were finally living in a nice neighborhood. Money was still hard but at least I was in a stable environment."

When she was in seventh grade, Post said she got a

SEE POST, 6A



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Some Eilers neighborhood property owners are starting a petition drive to get their property taxes cut in half due to the area's Superfund designation.

DEATH

Body found near mall ID'd

BY RYAN SEVERANCE
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

The woman whose body was found Saturday in a drainage ditch behind the Pueblo Shopping Center near the Pueblo Mall was identified Wednesday.

Pueblo County Coroner Brian Cotter said Sabrena Marie Rebeterano, 35, of Pueblo, died of nontrau-

matic means.

"There wasn't any kind of trauma associated or injury that would have immediately caused her death," Cotter said.

While trauma has been eliminated as a factor, there has been no clear cause of death established at this time, according to Cotter.

"We're waiting on other testing to be done," Cotter said.

According to police, a citizen walking his dog found Rebeterano's body in the ditch near the King Soopers store, 102 W. 29th St., at about noon Saturday.

The body was covered in mud and partially sub-

merged in water. There was more water than usual in the ditch due to the onslaught of moisture Pueblo received on preceding days as well as the day the body was found.

Cotter said that it didn't appear the body had been in the ditch for a long time.

ryans@chieftain.com