



Department of Public Works

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Mayor Tom Barrett and Santa Claus Talk Recycling and Waste Reduction** *City of Milwaukee Ratepayers can Save Money by Wasting Less – Recycling More*

**Milwaukee, WI (December 22, 2010)** – This morning, Mayor Tom Barrett and Santa Claus both paid a visit to the City of Milwaukee’s Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to discuss ways to reduce waste and recycle more this holiday season and all throughout the year. Reducing the amount of material that is sent to the landfill will benefit the environment as well as everyone’s pocketbooks, especially in light of recent increases in state taxes on garbage disposal.

“Disposing of garbage isn’t cheap, and heading into the holidays is a good time to think about what we can do to minimize our collective costs by reducing waste and recycling more”, said Mayor Tom Barrett. Santa Claus came all the way from the North Pole to talk about ways people can help reduce waste during the holiday season, a time of year when waste generation is higher – about 25% more – than any other time of year:

- Bring your own reusable sack when you shop.
- Purchase gifts with minimal and recyclable packaging.
- Avoid disposable tableware during holiday get-togethers.
- Keep and reuse gift boxes, wrapping paper, and decorative items.
- Recycle paper, cardboard, and containers (metal, glass, #1 and #2 plastic).
- Donate any unwanted items to local charities or thrift stores.
- Bring Christmas trees to Self-Help Centers to be composted or made into mulch.

“It’s important to be conscientious of this all-year-round and not just during the holiday season”, Mayor Barrett added. After the holidays, the importance of reducing waste continues because the increased landfill taxes cost the city and its residents an additional \$2 million per year.

To reduce costs, the City is implementing changes to garbage collection in 2011 that will encourage Milwaukee residents to send less waste to the landfill and more material to recycling and reuse centers. Effective January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, the City will begin charging households with more than one garbage cart. The charge will be \$5 per quarter for each additional cart. The fee will first appear on the second quarter water bill. Another change for 2011: the pickup of extra items outside the garbage cart is reduced to 1 cubic yard in size; above that amount, a \$50 charge will apply. These are small incentives to be more thoughtful about what and how much we throw away.

Residents will receive cart tags containing information on these changes, which are initial steps in a direction to more equitably align service level with cost while providing an incentive to reduce waste and recycle more. For more information or to request a pickup of extra garbage carts visit [www.milwaukee.gov/mpw](http://www.milwaukee.gov/mpw) or call (414) 286-CITY (2489).