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City of Milwaukee Announces Recycling Success, Single-Sort Collection and Expansion of Recyclable Materials

(Milwaukee, WI...September 29, 2011) Since the City of Milwaukee began its curbside recycling in 1989, the program has diverted more than 523,000 tons of recyclables from landfills – enough to fill Miller Park over three times. During the past 22 years, the City estimates it has saved more than \$15 million in landfill fees while re-circulating resources worth three times that amount back into the economy, conserving natural resources while supporting jobs. On September 29th, Mayor Tom Barrett, Public Works Commissioner Ghassan Korban, and Recycling Specialist Rick Meyers announced that City of Milwaukee residents are now able to take advantage of Single-Sort recycling – a convenient system requiring only one sort of recyclables from trash, allowing papers to be mixed together with cans and bottles. Additionally, they introduced some new items that are now able to be recycled.

“Recycling benefits the city in numerous ways,” says Mayor Tom Barrett. “When residents recycle, our city is a cleaner, more environmentally-friendly place. Increasingly, Milwaukee residents are showing that they understand the importance of recycling to conserving our natural resources and saving money. Plus, increased recycling means more revenue to support City services. That’s something we can all understand and appreciate.”

“Recycle for Good!” Improvements

The City’s residential recycling collection program, promoted as “Recycle for Good!”, currently serves approximately 185,000 households. With the new Single-Sort program in place, “Recycle for Good!” is getting better and easier. Residents are now able to recycle more materials and mix all items in one recycling cart – that means no more need to separate paper from plastic, metal, and glass.

New recyclable materials include:

- Plastics numbered 4 & 5, such as such as tubs and lids from margarine, cottage cheese and yogurt, as well as pill bottles (be sure to remove any labels to protect your privacy)

- Bulky number 2 plastics, like five-gallon buckets, old laundry baskets and crates (place large items inside or alongside the recycling container)
- Food and beverage cartons, including milk, cream, juice, soup, broth, egg substitute and other types of cartons
- Aluminum foil and pans, including pie pans and roasting pans
- Pots and pans

All containers should be empty and rinsed prior to placing in the recycling cart. The updated complete list of accepted recyclables now includes: phone books; cardboard; paperboard; newspapers; magazines and catalogs; mixed paper, including junk mail; cartons, aluminum cans, foil and baking pans; steel cans and empty aerosol cans; glass bottles and jars; plastics numbered 1,2,4 & 5 (including bulky number 2 plastics); pots and pans.

City Sets 2020 Landfill Diversion Goal

“With the convenience of Single-Sort and the ability to recycle many more items, including cartons, we’re making it extremely easy for City residents to recycle,” says Rick Meyers, a recycling specialist with the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works. “Our goal is to divert 40% of Milwaukee residential waste from landfills by 2020.”

Recycling of plastic tubs and lids (#4 & #5 plastics) is expected to recover a significant amount of the plastics remaining in the residential solid waste stream. Carton recycling will have a growing impact as the packaging material increasingly is showing up on grocery store shelves. The recycled carton paper fibers are a valuable resource for making new products, and consist of some of the highest quality fiber among recyclable products. Consequently, cartons have global demand and are shipped to paper mills, where the paper fiber is extracted to make new products such as tissue and paper toweling and even building materials.

City Education Campaign Kicks Off

A public awareness campaign to inform City residents about the “Recycle for Good!” improvements kicks off this week. The campaign includes radio commercials, print and online ads, a four-color mailer with refrigerator magnet, recycling truck graphics, updated information on MilwaukeeRecycles.com and a recycling pledge all City residents are encouraged to take. All who pledge to be a better recycler at MilwaukeeRecycles.com will be entered into a drawing for a compost bin.

“We ask all City residents – children, teens, adults and seniors – to review the new list of accepted materials in the Single-Sort program and make sure to recycle them all,” says Barrett.

Visit MilwaukeeRecycles.com to learn more about recycling, what can and cannot be recycled, what happens to recyclable materials once they’re collected by the City and the benefits of recycling.

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About the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works

The mission of the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works is to promote the health, safety, mobility and quality of life for all City of Milwaukee residents and visitors by providing:

- Safe, attractive and efficient surface infrastructure systems
- Solid waste collection, disposal, recycling and waste reduction
- Safe, aesthetically-pleasing and sufficient drinking water
- Storm water and waste water conveyance
- Support services and facilities for the Department of Public Works (DPW) and other City departments.