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CITYWIDE EXPANSION OF BLUE CART RECYCLING BEGINS

First of Four Expansion Phases to Deliver Recycling Services to 131,000 Households

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that more than 131,000 households will begin receiving blue cart recycling services in March and April as the recycling program expands citywide. Taking recycling citywide was a key 2013 budget initiative for the Mayor.

"Chicago will no longer be a tale of two cities when it comes to recycling," said Mayor Emanuel. "Adopting new strategies will allow us to expand blue cart recycling to every community in 2013, and residents will soon have greater access to recycling services, which will make Chicago a greener, more environmentally friendly city."

The blue cart recycling program provides bi-weekly recycling collection services to residents who live in single family homes, two-, three- and four-flat buildings. The expansion will include 340,000 households and is scheduled to be complete by the fall of 2013. Currently, 260,000 households receive blue cart recycling service.

In October of 2011, Mayor Emanuel implemented a managed competition for recycling services in an effort to create efficiencies and reduce operational costs to taxpayers.

In one year, the competition decreased recycling costs by \$4.7 million and paved the way for the citywide recycling expansion. The City projects an annual \$19.2 million investment for citywide recycling operations, compared with \$31.1 million without adopting managed competition—a 38 percent decrease.

To ensure a smooth transition during the expansion, each of the six city service areas will undergo a gradual expansion of households receiving new recycling services.

Subsequent phases will be announced as collection schedules and routes are finalized. Chicago's recycling service providers include the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation, Sims Municipal Recycling, and Waste Management.

“The Department of Streets and Sanitation and its partners are expanding our service areas in phases to ensure a seamless transition with effective operations and to make certain that current recycling services are not impacted,” said Charles Williams, Commissioner of the Department of Streets and Sanitation. “We will continue to use the same rollout method throughout the year as we expand recycling throughout the city.”

Residents who live within the boundaries of the March expansion area began receiving carts on February 18 and recycling collection services will begin as early as March 11. Residents who live within the boundaries of the April expansion area will begin receiving carts on April 15, and collection services will begin as early as April 29.

All blue carts will be delivered to the front of buildings, enabling crews to assign the cart’s radio frequency identification tag to the correct street address. Carts will contain educational literature about the blue cart recycling program, including information about the types of materials that can be diverted for recycling, as well as service schedule.

“I’m extremely pleased the residents of my community will finally have the opportunity to participate in the blue cart recycling program,” said Alderman Ariel Reboyras, 30th ward. “By offering greater access to recycling program, we can enhance the well-being of our city and build on Chicago’s reputation as a leader in sustainability efforts.”

“Residents have asked for easier access to recycling services, and I am glad that we will soon be offering increased access in my ward and neighborhoods across Chicago,” said Alderman Mary O’Connor, 41st Ward. “By expanding recycling citywide, Mayor Emanuel is making Chicago a greener, more environmentally friendly city for all residents.”

The City is also launching a citywide public outreach campaign to create enthusiasm for, and participation in, the recycling program. Working with aldermanic offices, Chicago Public Schools and community groups such as the Chicago Conservation Corps, the campaign includes media relations, direct-to-consumer outreach, social media engagement, numerous community education meetings and advertising.

The blue cart residential recycling program is a single stream recycling system in which all recyclable materials are collected and transported together. Recyclables are picked up and transported in designated recycling trucks to avoid contamination with regular garbage.

Materials are taken to a city-approved recycling center where they are sorted into separate materials, called commodities, then baled or packaged for delivery to manufacturers who reprocess or reuse the materials to make new products.

For more information about the blue cart recycling program, resident should call 311 or visit www.chicagorecycles.org.

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