

Garbage from source to scrap pile

ALEX NEWMAN

A Markham Disposal spokeswoman says she has a direct line to the Town of Markham because of the vast number of calls.

But Tony Masongsong of Markham Engineering quickly explains that Markham's disposal problems of late, though not pleasant, are understandable.

"To be fair to anyone in the garbage disposal industry," he says, "fall is a tough time. People put out their raked leaves, clean out their houses, especially after a nice weekend. So when Monday's pick-up is delayed, it spills over into Tuesday."

Over the past summer, Markham Disposal, which successfully bid on the Markham contract in 1985, was experiencing staffing problems. "Unemployment is quite low right now," says Masongsong, "and many jobs go begging. When you're short manpower, there's a lateness in service and the whole thing snowballs."

That problem, he claims, is now under control and Markham can now enjoy efficient garbage collection.

But, after Markham neatly ties its garbage, puts it out onto the street, then goes about its business, what happens to those bundles? Where do they go and who pays?

Contracting

Unlike the City of Toronto, says Masongsong, Markham doesn't employ their own garbage collectors. Every five or six years, a garbage contract is prepared, and tenders are submitted from private companies, like Laidlaw, Spademan, and Markham Disposal.

"Not necessarily the lowest

bid wins," claims Masongsong. "You look for value for money and a comprehensive package, which is really standard for any contract bidding. We've always used Markham Disposal, which tells you what their service has been like."

\$90 per household

Although Masongsong was reluctant to disclose the exact dollar amount of the contract with Markham Disposal which is binding until 1991, he did say the cost to the average household was approximately \$90 a year. This is figured on a mill rate basis — 2.9 mills per \$1,000.

In turn, Markham Disposal guarantees to provide twice weekly pick-up, maintain a proper number of vehicles and manpower to service properly, and to have proper liability insurance to cover damages to homes or motor vehicles.

The responsibility of the homeowner lies in the bundling of garbage. All waste must be contained in standard plastic bags; if grocery bags are used, they must be tied together. But if the garbage collector spills garbage in any way, it is his responsibility to clean.

Collectors don't work on most statutory holidays except Re-

membrance Day but pick-up of Christmas trees after the holiday is expected.

Markham is a fast-growing area, and collectors are kept busy. Tuesdays and Fridays are collection days for roughly the area east of Yonge and west of Woodbine; Mondays and Thursdays for east of Woodbine and west of the Ninth Line, according to Markham Disposal. On Wednesdays, pick-up is strictly for bulky items like furniture and the town is divided into areas, so that each should expect collection about every other month.

Landfill sites

Once the garbage is picked up from individual homes, the trucks rumble into Markham Disposal's transfer station, on Miller Avenue, where it is dumped on transfer trucks. From there, it is trucked to the Maple Landfill Site in the Keele Valley and dumped.

Masongsong anticipates that landfill site will be filled in about 14 years, but concerned citizens and politicians in the Town of Vaughan fear the Maple site will be filled much sooner than that.

Trucks (750 of them) filled with garbage from York Region

and Metro Toronto roar into the site, over roads that the Region fears won't hold up under the constant wear and tear.

The Brock West Landfill site in Pickering faces a similar uncertain future. Both sites are owned by Metro Toronto and both are filling fast.

Markham, although geographically situated in the middle, has a guarantee, as part of York Region, that their garbage will have a place to go for a long time yet. Metro's agreement with York Region was that in exchange for the use of Keele Valley, the region would have disposal rights for the full 20 years of the dump's expected lifespan.

A number of alternate sites have been considered for future dumping, but many of them are deemed unsuitable. Vaughan is afraid that Metro is casting more than a casual glance at 300 acres directly north of the present Maple site.

Despite the anxious search for new sites, a real problem that must be addressed is the sheer volume of garbage that our disposable world is creating.

Recycling

Richmond Hill currently

operates a recycling program through the town, but according to employee Grant Knox only the really dedicated separate their garbage. Most homeowners don't have a whole lot of time to devote to this sort of activity.

Richmond Hill, which will be implementing the blue box for recyclables, is in the process of handing over the contract to Markham Disposal. Masongsong says that the Town of Markham is seriously investigating the possibility of "going the same route. Council should be adopting a recommendation soon to establish a committee to study the proposal."

"Nothing is final, though, and in order for the program to be successful," he says, "75 per cent of Markham would have to participate."

Recycling is an expensive proposition, for equipment and a recycling depot would have to be purchased. Although, recyclable material can be sold, the system is not self-supporting and advantage over burying or burning garbage will only be realized in the long run.



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ADVERTISING CORRECTIONS

Eaton's Santa Sale Insert appearing in Metro and Suburban editions of the Toronto Star, Wednesday, November 18, 1987.

Pge. C45 - Dinosaur Comforters Item "B" Dinosaur Comforters are not reversible. The comforters reverse to a plain acetate backing.

Pge. C58 Item J/K - Incorrectly described, should read: J "Voyageur" Swiss Army Knife "K" Wenger "Backpacker".

Inadvertently, the errors listed above have appeared in our advertising. We sincerely regret any inconvenience or confusion to our customers.

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