

Consumers to dump more cash into waste pick-up

■ Garbage collection rates will increase on March 1

By Lindsay Buchele
Oregon Daily Emerald

Lane County residents will be forced starting March 1 to deal with the highest rate increase in solid waste and recycling collection since 1994.

Every two years, the city's Planning and Development Department meets with county waste collection companies to regulate costs. This year, customers will see 6 percent

increases in their bills. Representatives from local waste collection companies said they receive complaints from consumers every time garbage rates go up, and they're expecting another influx of calls soon.

But Nancy Young, solid waste/recycling analyst for Eugene Planning and Development, said waste collection companies are powerless to change garbage rates.

"The city is who determines the costs for haulers; we set the rates and the standards," she said.

Since 1994, the city has regulat-

ed landfill and hauling costs. Increases are based on normal inflation, the cost of fuel, the cost of labor and also the cost of recycling.

Recycling has become a huge part of Eugene's consumption methods, thanks in part to the 1994 Recycling Act, Young said. She also said that recycling drives up hauling costs.

Sam Miller, who co-owns Lane Garbage-APEX Disposal with his father, said years ago, his company was able to collect and haul solid waste with one worker and one truck. Now, with recycling added to

the duties, the process requires two trucks and two workers.

Miller also said that Eugene's growth accounts for more waste.

"The rate increases are not a result of people being wasteful," Miller said. "We're just growing."

Though residents have experienced rate increases in waste disposal before, Laura Kuhn, co-owner of ASW Disposal Incorporated, said customers on fixed incomes will experience real hardships.

"People with children are struggling to fit all their garbage in a 32-gal-

Solid Waste Prices

When Eugene began charging garbage collection by the pound in 1994, the price for emptying a 32-gallon trash can went down. Since then, prices have gone up.

August 1996: \$1.80 increase
November 1998: \$1.55 increase
March 2001: \$2.15 increase

Source: Eugene Planning and Development

lon can and aren't going to be able to afford price increases," Kuhn said.

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