



CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2013

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Colonial Heights Now Regional Leader in Recycling New Programs Result in More Trash Recycled; Less Landfilled

When the City of Colonial Heights made some tough choices and implemented new programs for residential curbside collection of household trash and recyclables, the City Council and staff were optimistic about the possible benefits. Upon review of the statistics from the first year of these programs, however, those changes have not only enhanced city services and saved money, but have also had a tremendously positive impact on the environment.

Since implementing the program changes on July 1, 2012, the City decreased its solid waste stream – household trash being collected and sent to the landfill – by *over 500 tons*; and recycling increased by a similar amount. At the same time, citizen participation in curbside recycling has essentially doubled – increasing to *more than 60%*.

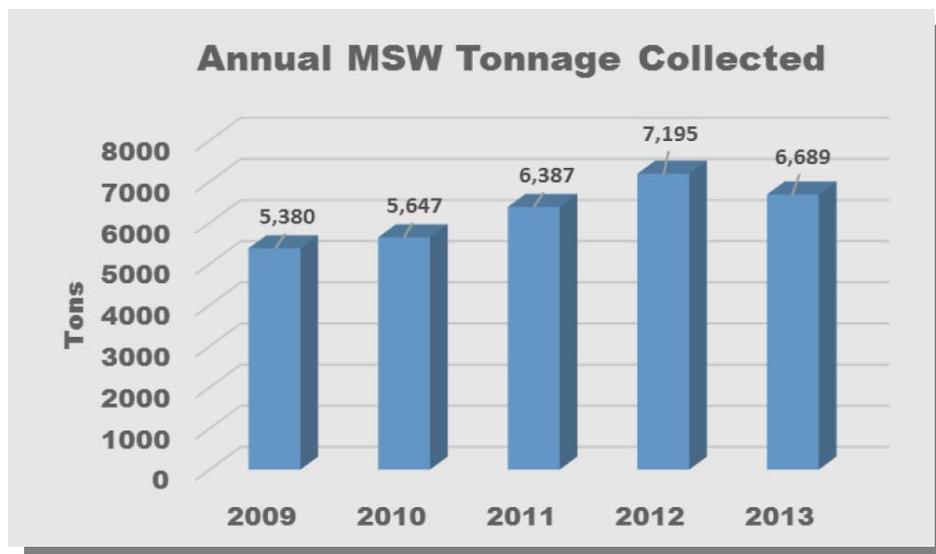
These statistics were among those included in the annual performance report presented to the City Council at its Work Session last week by the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA). The CVWMA is a regional public service authority whose general purpose is to implement solid waste and recycling programs for thirteen (13) area local governments.; including the cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg and Richmond, the Town of Ashland and the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan and Prince George.

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“We are very proud of Colonial Heights. City leaders took a very innovative approach to promoting and encouraging recycling,” said Kim Hynes, CVWMA Executive Director. “Our collection data for this past year shows that by taking a leadership role in the region, Colonial Heights reduced its waste stream by increasing its recycling efforts at the curb. We hope that others will follow their lead.”

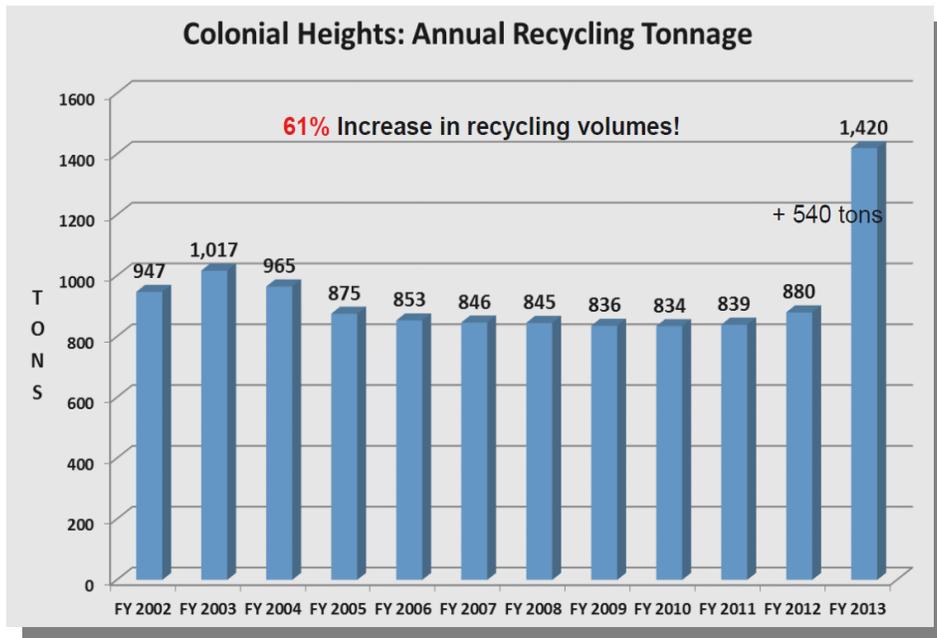
One of the broader goals of the new programs was to reduce the total amount of household trash coming from the city to local landfills. Colonial Heights took an innovative approach of replacing existing 96- gallon trash carts with a smaller, 68- gallon cart. In addition, single family households also received a new, much larger, 96-gallon green recycling cart. By providing a much larger *recycling* cart, residents have been able to significantly reduce the amount of household trash to be collected, thereby reducing the need for – and costs associated with – the larger *trash* cart.

“When we implemented these programs a year ago, we knew it would be for the overall good, even though it meant changes in long-established service routines” said Mayor Scott Davis. “As the numbers clearly indicate, however, our citizens have joined us in this effort to improve services while helping the environment.”



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As illustrated by the graph above, the City had been experiencing a steady increase in municipal solid waste (MSW) or household trash collected in recent years. In 2013, however, with the implementation of the new programs, the total amount of trash collected and delivered to the landfill *decreased by 506 tons*. Correspondingly, as depicted in the graph below, the total amount of recyclables collected increased by 540 tons – a **61%** increase.



Through contracts with Container First Services and TFC Recycling, the City and CVWMA worked together to also implement the additional programs and educate city residents on the new recycling opportunities. In addition to adjusting the sizes of the trash and recycling carts, the City implemented an incentive program to reward residents for recycling. Through the ‘Recycling Perks’ program residents can receive points each time they set out their recycling cart

“Colonial Heights now has the 2nd highest sign-up rate of all of our service areas for the ‘Recycling Perks’ program,” said Amelia Baker, TFC Marketing Project Manager. “In addition to individual savings/rewards to residents, 32 businesses in the City are program partners and have realized more than \$18,000 in new business from locals redeeming those rewards.”

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City residents have clearly responded positively to the new programs. Over the previous seven years, Colonial Heights steadily participated in curbside recycling at an average rate of 32% - that is, the percentage of homes in the city that set out recycling for weekly collection. In FY2013, however, coinciding with the implementation of the new trash and recycling programs, participation nearly doubled to *more than 62%*. This rate of now places Colonial Heights as the leader among all localities in CVWMA for resident participation in curbside recycling.

“Being responsible stewards of the environment through programs such as these is an important priority for the City,” said Vice-Mayor Diane Yates. “I am very pleased with these initial results and look forward to continuing to grow these programs in the future.”

Adding to the environmental enhancements, these new programs have also resulted in significant cost savings and future cost avoidance for the City. In FY2012-13, overall costs associated with residential trash and recycling services decreased by more than \$250,000 over the prior year. The savings achieved over this two-year period has already enabled the City to fund capital projects like the Shepherd Stadium restoration, the Public Safety Emergency Communications upgrade, and the Flora Hill Park playground equipment.”

“Achieving this cost reduction was absolutely imperative to producing balanced budgets for the last two years. Without those savings in the General Fund, the City would have had to raised taxes or significantly decreased services,” said City Manager Tom Mattis. “It’s actually been an ideal situation; It’s a significant achievement anytime the City can enhance services, help the environment, and save money in the process.”

Visit www.colonialheightsva.gov or www.cvwma.com for more information about Colonial Heights’ trash collection or recycling programs. Visit www.recyclingperks.com to learn more about TFC’s “Recycling | Perks” program.

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