

Residents green up

Tamara Cunningham, Didsbury Review, August 10, 2010

Didsbury hasn't dumped the green bin program, yet – in fact residents' attitudes toward the recycling program seem to be warming up.

When the green cart and closed lid policy was first enforced in 2007 to cut back on organic waste council received a list of gripes. Fines for open lids ranked at the top.

"But we haven't heard any issues with this in a long, long time so I assume no news is good news," said Councillor Jason Brander. "Like any change, it takes awhile for people to adjust – we were basically forcing them to recycle."

And residents have caught onto the movement. In 2006, 1,155 metric tonnes of garbage was hauled to the landfill. Forty per cent of that waste was organic.

When the green bins were brought in a year later Didsbury was able to send 310 tonnes to Olds College for composting and 1,080 metric tonnes to the landfill. Though the Mountain View Waste Commission still occasionally found a rubber boot or garbage contaminating grass cuts and rotting fruit.

This year waste trucked to dump was reduced again. Didsbury composed 31 per cent more at 223 tonnes in the first seven months of 2010 than it did during the same time last year. It recycled 9 per cent more, but increased waste by about 7 per cent or 456.25 tonnes – a number Mountain View Waste Commission CAO Don Reid lends to community growth.

Add to that, no one has been fined for having overfilled bins.

Seven people were fined anywhere from \$50 to \$225 in 2008 and last year several residents received warnings.

"I think things are going very well ... Didsbury is getting the message about recycling and doing it pretty consistently," Reid said.

But the town still has lots of room for improvement, he adds.

There are still those who aren't recycling at all and "we want them to start."

The incentive?

"Taxpayers pay to have us come and pick up their waste but if they recycle it ... it's free. The choice is theirs."