

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

“The market has been crazy of late,” City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland said Tuesday of the city’s recycling program.

When the economy took a big dip last year, Leyland said she couldn’t get rid of cardboard and newspaper, the two items the city recycles that had been most marketable.

Those items are used to back sheetrock, Leyland noted. When the economy flattened out, mills didn’t purchase them, as contractors weren’t building as many houses.

Leyland said, “Now it’s come back up.”

The city just sold four truckloads of cardboard, at 40,000 pounds each, for \$60 per ton. She’s seen it above \$100 per ton, but much lower, too.

Depending upon who offers the most money, Leyland sells to mills in Omaha, Lincoln or Kansas. This last load was sold to Star Fiber of Lincoln.

The city also shreds its plastics, and transports it to a company in Kearney when other city business takes employees that way.

“It’s been so long since we sold there I can’t tell you what we got paid,” she added.

Steel such as cans is sold to U.S. Recycling in Ogallala. Aluminum and office paper are also collected at the city’s recycling building on the south edge of town, along East Highway 6.

Glass is the only material not sold by the city. It is ground up and used for pipe bedding in trenches, in flower beds and in between patio stones. It is available to the public at no charge.

No changes have been made in the recycling program for some time. “It’s still a viable program,” Leyland said. “Everything is going pretty well.”

Is the program self-sustaining?

“If we factor in the fact we don’t have to pay for transporting trash to the transfer station, we’re close,” Leyland said. “Labor is probably the worst part,” when city employees have to bale materials and clean up the recycle building.

Leyland said she encourages people not to take items other than those recycled to the building. People sometimes dump off their trash there, and that makes a mess for everyone, she stated.