

## Extra trash exceeding toter capacity being left behind



**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

Some city residents are finding bags of trash left behind after the weekly Imperial sanitation truck has been by their homes.□

It wasn't missed. City sanitation crews are now picking up only what's inside the toter with its lid closed.

That's the way it is supposed to be, but admittedly, City Public Works Supt. Pat Davison indicated the crews had been picking up the excess trash outside the toter, then a charge would be added to the customer's next billing.

But, it's gotten out of hand.

In one month alone the past year, Davison estimated there were about 125 incidents where the trash set out exceeded what the toter would hold.

That required a lot of record-keeping by the sanitation crew, who then had to turn in the names to the city office for additional billing.

At the Dec. 10 meeting, Davison told council members there was a growing problem on the trash routes with people putting out extra bags of trash that exceed their toter, expecting it all to be picked up for the \$6 sticker charge.

Keeping track of all those with extra trash was becoming burdensome.

There had just been too many cases where extra bags full of trash were left on top the toter lids or piled around the toter, Davison said.

At the December meeting, the council directed Davison to tell his crew to pick up only what was inside the toter with the lid secured shut. The latest utility bills also included an information sheet to that effect.

Since then, the city office has fielded about 10 calls from residents who found extra bags of trash left behind, questioning what's happening.

Davison reminds local residents who are on the city's sanitation routes that they will be picking up only what is in the toter with the lid shut.

People have the option of purchasing a trash sticker for \$6 and placing it on their toter and setting it out, each time they want their trash dumped.

If the toter is full and additional trash needs to be picked up, special 30-gallon orange bags can

be purchased for the excess at \$2 at the city office.

Customers also have the option of being automatically charged on their monthly bill for regular trash pickup, but they will be charged whether the toter is out or not.

Davison said most of the problem is with residential customers. Most businesses use the larger commercial dumpsters which cost \$24 each time they are emptied.

Davison reminds residents that the city has to pay to dump its trash at the Southwest Nebraska Solid Waste Agency (SNSWA) transfer station, which is operated through an interlocal agreement between the city and Chase County.

Once the trash fills the transfer station, it is trucked to J Bar J Landfill, south of Ogallala, where the SNSWA pays a fee there to dump it.

In the early 1990s, the state of Nebraska instituted new rules requiring all trash be dumped in certified landfills. Imperial subsequently closed its landfill, opting for the system now in use.

It was also about that time the city instituted its volume-based rate system, requiring a sticker be placed on the receptacle for trash pickup (or the automatic monthly bill charge), in addition to a monthly sanitation fee.

### **Other sanitation service**

#### **also leaves excess trash**

Davison said he checked with Bill Bischoff, utility superintendent in Wauneta, this week to see how excess trash left outside receptacles is handled in that neighboring community.

Wauneta does not provide city trash pickup service, and most residents use Dan's Sanitation, a private company.

That firm uses a mechanism that lifts up the trash receptacle, dumping it into the truck. If excess bags placed on top of the receptacle fall off, they are left behind. Bags stacked around the receptacle are also left on the ground, since the truck driver does not get out of the vehicle.

### **Trash pickup options**

Residents who have more trash than will fit into the toter on pickup day have some options:

- 1) residents can purchase special 30-gallon bags at the city office for \$2. Put the extra trash inside the bags and leave them alongside or on top of the toter.
- 2) Those who feel they have an entire additional toter full of trash can put a second sticker on the trash/toter and it will be picked up.
- 3) Those consistently with enough trash to fill two toters and want to be on a regular system can have their monthly bill adjusted to reflect the additional charges.