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THE SOLID WASTE SERVICE FEE

Hello, Pope and Douglas County residents.

The Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management Board and each County board recently adopted an amendment to increase the Solid Waste Service Fee from \$49 to \$130. The large increase is needed because the fee has not been increased substantially since it was set at \$45 in 1987. Since that time, the number of residents using the services and level of services has greatly increased.

The State of Minnesota sets solid waste and recycling mandates and gives the Counties the responsibility to meet those mandates. Since adoption of the Waste Management Act of 1980 by the Minnesota Legislature, counties across the State have been contending with new concepts in solid waste management and how to deal with them. Landfill closures and shipping distances have increased the costs of managing solid waste. The Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management Board adopted a progressive stand toward solving solid waste problems.

The Solid Waste Service Fee generates revenues to fund the operations of solid waste systems including, but not limited to, the following:

- Recycling Education Programs
- Household Hazardous Waste Education Programs
- Composting and Organics Recycling Education Programs
- Solid Waste Abatement Education
- Operation of a permanent site Household Hazardous Waste Facility
- Operation of a Recycling Center and Material Recycling Facility
- Operation of Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events
- Operation of Event Recycling
- Partial Operations of the Pope/Douglas Waste to Energy Facility
- Operation of Household and Commercial Organics Recycling
- Support of Curbside Recycling
- Collection Site for Organics Recycling
- Collection Site for Used Motor Oil and Oil Filters
- Collection Site for Non-Freon Appliances and Metals to be Recycled

In addition, the Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Facility was built in 1987. Pope and Douglas Counties would like to see the facility operating for at least another 30 years to enhance recycling and provide an alternative to landfilling. In order to achieve this, the facility is in need of some significant repairs in the next few years. Part of the Solid Waste Service Fee will be used to cover the costs of upgrades and modernization of the facility.

As in other capital projects, such as streets and highways, it is entirely possible that some property owners or residents will find the solid waste system more useful than others. Regardless of how the solid waste management system is used, it is necessary that all property owners and residents realize that it is available to them and the initiative to use it is the responsibility of the individual.

The annual service fee will be assessed on all properties with a building value of \$5,000 or more. Most individuals will see the service fee as an additional line item on their property tax statement in the amount of \$130.00. Those property owners who own multiple family, mobile homes, or apartment units will see this line item as a lump sum figure, which has been arrived at by multiplying the number of units by \$130.00. Commercial/Industrial buildings with a building value of more than \$5,000 will also be assessed for the solid waste service fee. This fee for services is not a tax and satisfies the laws of the State of Minnesota.

If you have any questions regarding the service fee or any part of the solid waste program, please call me at (320)763-9340 or 1/800-972-6318.

Stephen Vrchota, Executive Director
Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management Board