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# City purchases recycling trailer to boost public participation

By CAROLINE EGGERS [ceggers@bgdailynews.com](mailto:ceggers@bgdailynews.com) Mar 15, 2019

The city of Bowling Green recently purchased a recycling trailer with a grant from the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet.

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City of Bowling Green environmental manager Matt Powell picked up a shiny, new toy for the city Wednesday: a green trailer emblazoned with “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.”

In an effort to bolster resource conservation, the city recently purchased a recycling trailer with a grant from the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet and will park it near any large gatherings of people.

“We want people to think before they throw something away, is it trash or recycling?” Powell said. “It’s just another step to do a better job with our resources.”

About two years ago, two Western Kentucky University student interns evaluated the city’s waste stream and identified two things: the city needed more internal recycling – as employees were tossing out cardboard, paper and other recyclables – and the city needed to apply for grants to increase recycling.

Last year, the city staff did both. They began setting out red bins each week and decided to apply for EEC’s Kentucky Pride Fund Recycling Grant.

At that time, Powell heard that WKU was going after the same grant to purchase three trailers to replace their old recycling bins.

Elizabeth Gafford, the WKU coordinator of resource conservation, offered to simply add a fourth trailer to her grant application.

On Wednesday, both WKU and the city received their new trailers, which carry the insignias of WKU Resource Conservation and the city of Bowling Green – the only difference is that WKU’s trailers are blue instead of green.

The city will be providing recycling during special events, and wherever else there may be a need. Before, Powell suggested he was “a little embarrassed” that the city hadn’t been providing recycling during public gatherings.

Paper, plastics Nos. 1-7, mixed metal, cardboard and glass will be collected in the city’s single-stream trailer. Once full, the trailer will be transferred to Southern Recycling, which recently expanded its Bowling Green-based operations to a second processing facility.

Powell hopes the increased visibility of recycling will normalize waste sorting and encourage more people to participate in diverting weight from landfills.

“When people see their neighbors taking the effort to set their bins out each week, it grows the practice,” Powell said.

WKU will use its three new trailers to replace the bins currently used for on-site recycling. Previously, WKU had to contact Scott Waste Management each time they needed to empty the bins – which cost about \$160 per trip and occurred at least once per week.

With two of the new trailers, WKU staff can personally drop off the single-stream recyclables – the same materials as the city’s trailer – to Scott Waste, which will then transfer the materials to a Louisville-based recycling facility. The third trailer will solely collect cardboard, and that will be transferred to Southern Recycling for processing.

“It’s saving the university \$10,000 a year,” Gafford said.

Students, staff and members of the community can use the WKU recycling trailers. Gafford frequently sees people unloading their cars with recyclables – and she encourages them to keep doing so.

“Really it’s just a recycling resource for anyone who doesn’t have access to recycling at home or a business,” she said.

Now that campus staff will be able to more easily switch out the containers once they’re full, Gafford hopes that WKU will be able to exceed its current average of about 110,000 pounds of recycling each year.

“Every time I walk by there’s people recycling,” Gafford said. “It’s heartwarming to see people making the extra effort to recycle.”

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**Caroline Eggers**

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