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City trash trucks to flex muscles on expanded diet

By Mike Hill
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RACINE — Beginning July 7, city trash crews will be picking up furniture, hot water tanks, windows, screens, TVs, bed springs and a whole bunch of other big stuff.

All residents have to do is dump the stuff on their curbs.

But, don't dump refrigerators, freezers, stoves, dishwashers, washing machines or dryers on the curb because those won't be picked up.

The city's got 11 new, larger garbage trucks with double the compaction power of the old trucks.

The trucks have a 25-cubic-yard and 26,000-pound payload capacity, compared to the old trucks' 20-cubic-yard and 12,000-pound payload capacity, said Fred Larson, city public works commissioner.

"This means we will be able to take things on a regular weekly basis that we've never accepted before, as opposed to having people save all of their bulky items for Clean Up Week. If we can get it into the hopper of the truck, we can compact it."

The city bought the new trucks for about \$1 million, but Larson says the city will be paid back within five years due to annual savings of \$220,000 by being able to reduce trash routes from 13 to 11.

The reduction in routes also eliminates four jobs, Larson said,

and that means 22 men, or two per truck, is all it will take to get trash collected from the city's 28,000 units.

Larson said the city has been streamlining trash collections for about 15 years by moving from back door to curbside pickup and reducing the routes and employees. In 1971, the city had 64 men working 32 routes, he said.

Besides not accepting appliances, DPW will continue its restrictions on other types of refuse.

Each trash container must not exceed 30 gallons in volume or be heavier than 50 pounds. Pipes and antennae can be no more than 4 feet long. Branches and shrubbery must be in stacks or bundles no more than 4 feet long and no more than 2 feet tall.

Paint cans should be packed with absorbent paper and closed tightly. Rugs and mattresses should be rolled and tied with maximum lengths of 4 feet. Animal waste should be wrapped in paper and put in moisture-proof containers.

Besides appliances, the city still won't pick up vehicle parts, tree parts greater than 3 inches in diameter, demolition or construction materials, and any waste that is hazardous, toxic, nauseous or offensive.