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Board hears budget, recycling report

By Jeff Metzger

We had a report from Karen Grush, DeKalb County Public Health Director, at our January Health and Human Services Committee meeting. She reported that 25 percent of her revenues come from state grants, and that Illinois grants have been reduced by 4 percent to 5 percent this year. She also indicated that Public Aid is not paying, and there is roughly \$300,000 outstanding from Public Aid yet to be paid to the Health Department. The health department has roughly 92 employees, and her department recently unionized with a contract good for four years. Grush reported that DeKalb County had a 54 percent total recycling rate, providing the most recent statistics from 2007. The state goal is 25 percent, so we are well ahead of the game. I would like to see more households in the county involved in curbside recycling, so I asked Grush to send me recycling details to share with you. Items that can be recycled curbside are determined by the hauler. I have provided below a list of items accepted by Waste Management, but you can check with your hauler, if it is not Waste Management, for their list. The list include: white and light-colored bond paper; white and light-colored copy paper; plain, window or manila envelopes; computer paper (greenbar or plain); NCR forms (carbonless paper); calculator tape; yellow legal paper; file folders; letterhead paper; junk mail; index cards; flyers; newspaper and magazines; trade publications; note paper; Post-It Notes; cardboard; glossy paper; telephone books; bottles; jars; cans; aluminum; plastic jugs and bottles (discard caps) with numbers 1, 2 and 5. Make sure all items are empty and clean. Not accepted are other plastics, regardless of markings, plastic bags, and no automotive or pesticide containers. The health department offers several one-day recycling collections annually. Electronics, household batteries and compact fluorescent bulbs are all part of these collections. There will also be a latex paint collection in 2009. Residents with questions about waste/recycling can call 815-748-2408.

Update from coroner/ESDA director We also heard from Dennis Miller, DeKalb County coroner and Emergency Services and Disaster Agency director. Miller informed the committee that DeKalb County Emergency Services is much better prepared for an emergency then they were five years ago. He indicated that the entities they have brought together three years ago, from all over the county, work very well together. Miller then explained to the committee there were 490 deaths last year, which is more than 2007. His office handles 40 to 50 autopsies each year, and more than 300 cremations. This spring, Miller plans to introduce legislation in Springfield to help raise the permit fee on cremations from \$10 to \$25 or higher to help cover the costs. Jeff Metzger, R-Sandwich, is a DeKalb County Board member representing the county's 12th District. He can be reached via e-mail at jeffmachv8@yahoo.com.

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