

Clayton County BOS selects new contractor for rural garbage collection

By Audrey Posten

Clayton County will have a new contractor for rural trash and recycling collection. The Board of Supervisors (BOS), at its April 22 meeting, selected Kluesner Sanitation to provide weekly pickup at remote sites in the county as well as collection at the county shop in Elkader starting June 1.

Kluesner's bid totaled \$347,424 per year—\$240,144 for the remote sites and \$107,280 for the Elkader site—eclipsing the \$474,000 annual total proposed by current hauler Hawkeye Sanitation. Hawkeye's breakdown included \$390,000 per year for remote sites and \$84,000 for Elkader.

Waste Management bid on the Elkader site only, proposing \$168,000 per year. A representative said the company's attorneys and insurance are not comfortable with live load pickups, so they did not bid the rural sites.

The bidding process comes several months after the BOS, facing strong objections from residents, re-evaluated a plan that would have eliminated rural garbage collection sites and required those in rural dwellings to dispose of their garbage in Elkader.

The BOS cited cost as the impetus for bidding the services. The county budgets around \$170,000 annually for garbage services, an amount supervisor Ray Peterson said Hawkeye Sanitation planned to raise by nearly \$200,000. Hawkeye previously stated the jump was because it had not raised prices for the county in 15 years.

The scope of services includes an item for weekly trash and commingle recycling collection at six rural sites in the county—in Gunder, Garnavillo, Strawberry Point, Garber, Millville and McGregor. The contractor is asked to staff the sites a minimum of five hours each, or four hours for Saturday locations. The contractor will propose the weekly schedule, with approval by the board of supervisors.

Additionally, the contractor will be asked to use an electronic system to track which residents use this service and at which locations, and to verify that only rural residents are using this service. The county will also use this system to determine the feasibility of each site and may choose to alter sites after the first year of the contract.

BOS chair Doug Reimer said this does not mean the county will eliminate rural garbage collection.

"We've listened to concerns. The first time we did it, we didn't do it right. When we got rid of it, we didn't think it would be a big deal. I admit to that," he said. Now, "we're going to look into it and make sure each one is feasible."

Separate to collection at remote sites, the contractor will provide daily (Monday through Saturday) disposal of trash/recycling for Clayton County rural residents at the county shop in Elkader. That will include having a trash compactor, cardboard compactor and commingle recycling roll-off, which would all be dumped as needed.

A third item on the RFP asked contractors to propose pricing to dispose of construction debris and bulk items by a roll-off container at the Elkader County Shop site. Clayton County charges residents a fee to dispose of special items at the roll-off container located in Elkader, and these fees are retained by the county.

Clayton County requested a three-year contract for the rural sites and five years for the Elkader site.

Hawkeye Sanitation said varying lengths of contracts and uncertainty surrounding the remote sites was reflected in its higher bid.

"The reason for the increased bid this time from our first time is because this is essentially a one-year contract. We're not guaranteed anything after one year. They could cut down the sites to one site and that's what we would be left with," said

Hawkeye representative Julian Merritt. "There's a lot of caveats and unknowns."

At the April 22 meeting, Hawkeye said it would be willing to honor its previous bid of five years, with services starting at \$20,000 per month the first year and increasing to \$28,879 by the final year. The current bid put them at \$32,500 per month for rural sites.

Residents who have been pleased with Hawkeye's service over the years also asked the BOS to reconsider, or even table a decision to investigate the matter further.

"This is not a one-year contract," responded Reimer. "We're trying to figure out if there's anything better than what we're doing. We want the board to have better insight into what's happening and do what's best for Clayton County. We put out what we wanted for bids. They could have put that number on here. All vendors got sent the same thing."

Reimer said the BOS has been reviewing rural trash and recycling collection for around a year. He, Peterson and the other supervisor, Steve Doeppke, were ready to move forward.

"It's time. We're going to make a decision today. We've done what we're supposed to do. It's our fiduciary responsibility to take care of this," he said.

The new contract with Kluesner is anticipated to start June 1. A representative from the company said they will make sure there's no interruption of services for residents. Kluesner will also review how services are provided.

"Just because this is the way we've done things for 20 years doesn't mean it's the best option. We're going to start with this. After the three-year contract is up, we'll know how many people use each site, possibly merge two close sites to one to possibly save taxpayers money and figure out a more efficient way to haul the trash from Clayton County up to Winnebago County. This is a good basis to start," he said.



Work is underway on the infrastructure for Marquette's Twin Bluffs Subdivision, which is located between the city shop/police station and Gencor. (Photo by Audrey Posten)

Work underway on infrastructure for Marquette's Twin Bluffs Subdivision

Work is underway on the infrastructure for Marquette's Twin Bluffs Subdivision.

In November, the Marquette city council approved an \$821,016.74 bid from Bacon Concrete of Postville to install infrastructure for the long anticipated housing project between the city shop/

police station and Gencor. Work includes site excavation/grading and construction/installation of streets, sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer and stormwater management. Work must be substantially complete by August.

The city of Marquette is financing the infrastructure, in hopes of making

the site more appealing for a potential developer to construct housing. Earlier this month, the city advertised the opportunity, seeking a developer to build for age 55-plus, duplexes that are 1,000 to 1,200 square feet, one and two bedroom, affordable, multi-unit housing, for rental or private owner.

Corps to host public informational meeting in Prairie du Chien on May 13

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, will host an informational meeting to introduce the public to its ongoing work in the areas of Pools 8 through 10 of the Upper Mississippi Area on May 13, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. A presentation will begin at 4:30 p.m.

The event will be held at the Prairie du Chien Library, 125 S. Wacouta Ave.

Multiple Corps staff members from across the organization will be available to provide information and address specific

questions. Topics discussed will include lock and dam operations and upcoming projects, dredged materials management program, shoreline management and other environmental activities, recreation activities, environmental engineering and flood risk reduction projects and water management activities in Pools 8 through 10 of the Upper Mississippi River.

The meeting will be posted on the district's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/usacemvppao.

People needing special accommodations for the meeting should contact (651) 290-5807 or cemvppa@usace.army.mil no later than April 25.

The Civil Works programs include water resource development through flood risk management, navigation, recreation and infrastructure and environmental stewardship. The Corps plans, constructs, operates and maintains a broad range of water facilities to meet the nation's evolving needs.

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