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Cutting costs, talking trash

Sanitation District 2 is striving to work harder and smarter

Chris Connolly



Whether markets are bullish or bearish, whether the housing market is up or down, someone's got to take out the trash. For the men and women of Sanitary District 2, this has meant instituting changes that will affect most residents of Baldwin.

In the wake of the January ratification of the 2011 sanitation budget — which contained a 1.8 percent tax levy increase, from \$10.65 million to \$10.84 million — unionized sanitation workers and their department heads sat down to figure out ways to improve services while saving money. Some of the changes they have devised will require adjustments on the part of Baldwinites, while others will play out largely behind the scenes.

“After the contract, which came into effect in January 2011, we reduced our number of collection routes,” explained Douglas Wiedmann, secretary to the Board of Sanitation. “We also gave up Election Day as a holiday and reduced minimum staffing from 38 to 36.”

Wiedmann pointed out that while these measures could be perceived as cuts, a reduction in services would not be evident in areas served by the sanitation district: Baldwin, Roosevelt, South Hempstead and sections of Freeport, Oceanside, Rockville Centre and Uniondale.

The personnel cuts were accomplished via attrition — retiring laborers who were not replaced, Wiedmann said, while highlighting the expansion of certain other aspects of sanitation service. “We’ve increased the number of things we collect, as far as recycling,” he said. “New items we’ll take and recycle include magazines, junk mail, cardboard and all

Preparations are under way for the 2011 Big Sweep. The annual event, during which sanitation volunteers and community-minded residents clean up major avenues in preparation for Memorial Day, is scheduled for Saturday, with a rain date of Sunday. The district invites all who are interested to participate by meeting at 9 a.m. at one of two locations: the Sanitation District office, 2080/2090 Grand Ave., or the Roosevelt Public Library, 27 W. Fulton Ave.



kinds of paper. We also added an e-cycling program, through which we will be collecting and recycling TVs, computers, gaming systems and that kind of thing. We’ve scheduled two pickups per month for those items.”

Wiedmann recommended that people looking for information on the new recycling policies or hoping to schedule pickups should study the fliers their sanitation workers distribute. He added that the department's website, www.sani2.com, is being revamped and will soon offer a wealth of new features. He also cautioned residents recycling junk mail to remove any identifying information from the materials to protect against identity theft. One of the most noteworthy cost-cutting measures the department has devised is the elimination of blue plastic recycling bags that were previously distributed to residents. "Those bags cost money, and we were just handing them out and then dumping them back into the trash," Wiedmann said.

In lieu of the bags, District 2 is now providing new, larger blue recycling boxes to residents whose current receptacles can't contain all of their recyclables. The bigger boxes are available at the district offices, through the website, or by calling (516) 223-3207.

The other big news at the sanitation district is that preparations are under way for the 2011 Big Sweep. The annual event, during which sanitation volunteers and community-minded residents clean up major avenues in preparation for Memorial Day, is scheduled for Saturday, with a rain date of Sunday. The district invites all who are interested to participate by meeting at 9 a.m. at one of two locations: the Sanitation District office, 2080/2090 Grand Ave., or the Roosevelt Public Library, 27 W. Fulton Ave.

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