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JBLM's recycling contract a Net Zero first

By **Brendalyn Carpenter/Northwest Guardian**

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Joint Base Lewis-McChord personnel habitually toss office trash into outside dumpsters and recyclables into the nearest containers for pick-up. It's a routine that for years has allowed base employees to make anonymous choices about what to recycle and what to waste.

Change is on the horizon. Implementation of JBLM's new Base Refuse and Diversion Contract is set to make recycling and waste generation more public, and more visible to building occupants. The method to collect that data will be nothing close to routine.

For the last two-and-a-half years JBLM Directorate of Public Works and Mission and Installation Contracting Command staff developed a plan that consolidates basewide recycling and refuse services under one contract. The result is JBLM's first diversion and disposal contract aimed at achieving the Army's Net Zero objectives by 2020.

This one, in particular, has been recognized as a benchmark contract for other installations because of its objectives under Net Zero, said Thomas Ebenhoh, JBLM MICC contracting officer.

"We arrived at a contract that was written to take us to our goal," said James Lee, Directorate of Public Works Qualified Recycling program manager of his work with the MICC team. "That was the good news; the bad news was, the contract by itself can't get you there because the contractor isn't the person who's putting trash in the can," he said.

"So we had to figure out a way to engage the public in a meaningful way so our contract could be successful," Lee said.

DPW and LeMay Inc., JBLM's waste management and recycling contractor, have partnered to implement strategies that will increase recycling and waste diversion. The plan uses an innovative approach to establishing accountability for what goes into the recycling and refuse containers at JBLM offices and unit areas, coupled with an ambitious outreach, education and marketing strategy.

With support from JBLM's leaders, a plan of action will move forward in two phases.

In Phase 1, all military units and activities that use refuse or recycling containers at their facilities must identify an individual who will be responsible for all refuse and recycling containers associated with each building on JBLM.

A single point of contact for each building will be responsible for resolving issues associated with each refuse and recycling container at his or her building.

For the first time, recycling will be managed building-by-building, and records will be available for each including refuse weights.

"Weighing is a new concept," Lee said. "The trucks have all been retrofitted with truck scales so that when the truck picks up the can, there are sensors in the arms that sense the weight."

DPW will get a report of everything picked up to see a break-out of garbage and recycle. The staff will do the math for each building to establish its diversion rate.

The building-by-building report will enable the base to eventually establish reimbursable billing and mock billing for non-reimbursable customers. Essentially, it will tell occupants their building's waste disposal costs, and potential savings from recycling and waste



1st Sgt. Scott Stull, 1st Joint Mobilization Brigade facility manager, tosses recyclables into the commingled recycling bin. 1st JMB is the first unit to assign a building point of contact to support JBLM's new Net Zero Waste requirements. "We want to make sure we do our part and recycle and help the base reach its 2020 vision."

diversion.

The diversion rate is important to both JBLM and the contractor.

For JBLM, one of five installations selected in 2011 by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy, and Environment, to be a Net Zero Waste by 2020 pilot installation, increased diversion brings the base even closer to that goal.

JBLM officials also seek benefits that have immediate, long-term impacts on the base community. Recycling generates revenue that goes back to JBLM's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs, and safety and natural resources projects.

In the last two years, the QRP funded \$350,000 to help build the Army Family Covenant Splash Park and \$175,000 annually to help maintain the facility.

For the contractor, the new 10-year contract is incentivized to generate more profit from the sale of recycled commodities it collects than for the amount of waste it hauls off base.

The contractor is granted the ability to earn up to 50 percent of the proceeds from the sale of recycled commodities, Lee said, based on diversion performance.

Changes will gradually become apparent. In the coming months the gray, 96-gallon, two-wheeled commingled containers will be phased out and replaced with larger, front-loader containers that accommodate the truck scales. Large dumpsters will also be phased out and replaced with waste containers appropriate for the amount of waste generated by each building.

"Part of what we're doing is right-sizing the facility," said Shelia Martin, DPW Recycling Outreach coordinator. "Not every facility has a need for an eight-yard container; some facilities only need a one-or two-yard container."

The changes help prevent illegal dumping by selecting appropriate containers for each facility, she said. Units and base activities will use existing containers until the new versions become available.

Martin said, while the program is a major step in the right direction, DPW anticipates challenges.

"There are going to be little tweaks along the way; we'll have to take things step-by-step; it's going to be a learning curve," she said.

Phase 2, debuts the Net Zero Competition.

JBLM military units can earn cash awards of up to \$10,000 for their unit fund accounts and recognition for practicing sustainable behaviors that increase recycling, divert waste, conserve energy and water, and improve air quality.

The Net Zero Competition is a mechanism to engage the base community, said Terry Austin, DPW Installation Sustainability Net Zero coordinator. It's a tool to get the attention of those who are not aware of the base's sustainability goals, she said.

"If the prize money is what gets them interested, that's OK," Austin said. The cash awards come from proceeds generated from base recycling. So the money is actually being returned to the people on this installation who have done the work of recycling and conservation, she said.

The first competition period is from April 1 to August 31, but the registration deadline is March 31.

For now the cash awards are only available to units, but Lee said they are still looking into appropriate ways to recognize civilians for their recycling efforts.

For details and to register for the competition upload the award packet at the Net Zero Competition AKO page (<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/682248>) by March 31.

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