



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Contract Forces Changes at Knox County Convenience Centers

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—During Knox County’s most recent procurement process for Recycled Material Recovery Services the County’s sole bidder and current vendor, WestRock Converting, LLC, did not include a glass recycling option in their bid response. On July 31, 2019, WestRock formally notified the County’s Solid Waste Division via letter that they would suspend the “receiving, handling and marketing of glass bottles and jars collected at the County’s drop off centers” effective Sept. 1, 2019. These changes do not affect the City of Knoxville’s drop-off locations, which contracts separately for their services.

“With this business decision by WestRock to no longer accept the material, Knox County does not have another viable option for recycling glass at this time, so I would encourage other companies with practical glass recycling solutions for the County to come forward,” said Knox County Solid Waste Director Drew Thurman.

Most government solid waste programs depend on revenue generated from the sale of recyclables to offset costs within their operating budgets. Knox County is no exception. While most other materials in the recycling stream continue to generate small revenues, glass recycling has not generated proceeds for some time. Up to this point, including glass in the recycling program allowed the County to avoid landfill costs because it was accepted by the processor free of charge.

In preparation for this change, all County Convenience Centers will stop accepting glass containers for recycling on Aug. 26, 2019. Residents should place glass in with their regular trash for disposal. The County will remove glass recycling containers at the Centers and use that space for other recyclable items. Knox County’s new contract with WestRock does not impact paper, plastic or metal recycling.

“Residents are encouraged to consider reducing the amount of glass they purchase and to reuse materials or find other uses for their recyclables as often as possible,” said Knox County Recycling Coordinator Linnea Boogades. “Glass jars with tight fitting lids can be used to store leftovers and with some creativity and craft supplies, a bottle or jar can become a unique vase or storage container for smaller items.”

Visit knoxrecycles.org or knoxcounty.org/solid_waste/ or more information on Knox County Convenience Centers, including facility locations, hours of operations and what items are accepted for disposal. Entrepreneurs interested in offering glass recycling options or center users with questions should contact Knox County Solid Waste at (865) 215-5865.

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