

## Changes to Curbside Collection Meleesa Johnson

It has been no secret that the Solid Waste Management Board (SWMB) has been working to find a new provider of curbside collection services for waste and recycling. The board began this work in September 2008 when they became aware of the financial difficulties facing contract provider, Wittenberg Disposal.

At first, the search was for a “contingency” provider that would step in within a few days notice should Wittenberg’s money woes serve to interrupt or cease curbside services. Even though Wittenberg Disposal continued to provide service throughout their difficulties, the SWMB felt that several key issues still had the potential to threaten consistent, reliable curbside service to Portage County residents.

Of greatest concern to the SWMB was the condition of the trucks used to service the Portage County contract. Most of the trucks used in Portage County showed significant signs of age and damage. Given that the average cost of a new collection truck is around \$200,000 and the repairs to or replacement of major parts (engines, transmissions, hydraulic systems) would be costs Wittenberg Disposal may not be able to easily manage, the SWMB finally opted to seek bids from a new pool of haulers with greater financial stability.

A request for bids was released on March 24, 2009, with sealed bids opened on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Four companies qualified to bid on the project (had the financial standing and attending a pre-bid meeting). However, only two companies opted to submit a bid for curbside collection of waste and recycling.

In the end, Veolia ES Solid Waste Midwest (Wisconsin Rapids) was the lowest, most qualified bidder and the SWMB awarded the contract to them at an April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Veolia is slated to begin collection service to Portage County during the week of May 18<sup>th</sup>.

In the Town of Lanark, Wittenberg Disposal will collect for the last time on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Carts owned by Wittenberg Disposal will be collected on or shortly after that date. New carts from Veolia will be delivered as they arrive. However, the order for new carts may not arrive by the start date. So, the Solid Waste Department asks that residents of Lanark watch for updates on the department’s (<http://www.co.portage.wi.us/mrfb/index.htm> ) and the town’s (<http://www.townoflanark.org>) websites, as well as for announcements in local newspapers.

Residents with questions or concerns are welcome to call the Solid Waste Department at 715-345-5969.