

Composting Sparks Interest In Kodiak

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There's increasing interest in composting in Kodiak these days. It's the result of a combination of factors, including rapidly decreasing landfill space and a desire on the part of some people to find new uses for the town's solid waste. KMXT's Casey Kelly reports.

The City of Kodiak is looking for a new way to dispose of sludge, or human waste, from its wastewater treatment plant. Last year the Kodiak Island Borough informed the city that in two years it would no longer be able to accept sludge at its landfill. Space is becoming an issue as are environmental concerns. So Public Works Director Mark Kozak says the city started looking into alternative disposal methods, including composting.

(Kozak 1 :13s "hellip;good for our users.")

Of the three options the city considered for sludge disposal, composting is the most feasible and the cheapest. One option, known as cannibalism, involves having tiny bugs eat the sludge. That was ruled out due to Kodiak's cool climate, which wouldn't be ideal for keeping the microorganisms alive. The other option was incineration, which has substantially higher overall costs than composting.

(Kozak 2 :16s “…of
the wastewater system.”)

But the plan isn't without obstacles. In addition to sludge, the city needs a certain amount of other material, such as cardboard and yard debris, to mix with the human waste and make composting on such a large scale doable. The cardboard should be no problem. It's the yard debris that Kozak says he's unsure about. So the city is planning a pilot project that will offer a snapshot of a larger composting program, to make sure it can be realistically done.

(Kozak 3 :27s “…to
go with the biosolids.”)

Another aspect of the pilot program will be to gauge the public's interest in the end product of composting. There's concern that people in Kodiak won't want to have anything to do with the compost soil once it's produced. But if Rick Pillans is any indication, that should be no problem. Pillans is the manager of the Threshold Recycling in Kodiak and a member of the borough's Solid Waste Advisory Board.

(Pillans 1 :15s “…soil
for growing things.”)

Pillans is looking to start his own composting program. For now, it's separate from the city's pilot project, but he says if it works they may decide to join forces.

(Pillans 2 :30s “…without
those numbers.”)

Pillans is planning a trip to South Dakota next month for a composting conference. When he returns he hopes to meet with interested parties and discuss the feasibility of composting in Kodiak. The Kodiak City Council will review and approve a proposal for the city's composting pilot program at its October regular meeting.

Kelly. I'm Casey

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