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Elgin a trendsetter in recycling

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The city of Elgin is on the way to becoming the first city in the state to have a curbside recycling program for used clothing and home goods.

Molly Center, city communication specialist, said a separate eco-friendly van will go through neighborhoods on regular garbage pickup days. There will be no charge to the city for this service.

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"Everyone will get bags for this program automatically through Simple Recycling," Center said. "If you use two bags, you will be given three replacements."

Paul Gardner, a Simple Recycling representative, said the program reduces waste in landfills.

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"Unlike some donation centers or thrift stores, donated clothing need not be in good or fair condition," he said.

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The city will be compensated on a per-pound basis. If the city collects 2.24 million pounds of used clothing, it would gain about \$22,400 in revenue.

Mayor Dave Kaptain said, "This is a good idea. I have received complaints about recyclable materials being left around, and this program will make it easier for people to properly dispose of it."

"I hope that the little bit of money that could be generated can be applied to the Sustainability Commission," he added.

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Violators — those putting garbage in the orange bags, which are clearly marked for recycling — would be referred to the city by Simple Recycling. They could be cited under existing regulations, Gardner said.

City Council member Rosamaria Martinez said she wishes the city had done this sooner.

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"This is a good idea and way to get rid of things," she said.

With this program being implemented at no charge to the city, and having the possibility of generating a small amount of income, it is a worthwhile way to assist Elgin residents in ridding their homes of unwanted clothing and home goods.

It also is a great way to help rid local landfills of unwanted goods that should be recycled. Elgin is proving to be a trendsetter in the area of curbside recycling, and other local and state municipalities should consider joining such a valuable recycling program.

Linda McDaniel-Hale is a Fox Valley resident who offers opinion on local topics.

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