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OCEANSIDE

GETTING THE SUN TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH

Solar-powered compactor seen as cost-saver for cities

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There's a new attraction at the pier city officials hope will draw lots of visitors. It's a solar-powered trash compactor, along with an adjacent recycling bin.

The compactor was donated to Oceanside by Waste Management Inc., which hopes to encourage municipalities across the country to buy them.

Over the next few months, sev-



Lori Somers of Waste Management demonstrates Oceanside's new solar powered trash compactor at the Oceanside Municipal Pier on Wednesday. HAYNE PALMOUR IV | hpalmour@nctimes.com

eral more of the bright green and yellow compactors will be installed in San Diego County as part of the demonstration program. One will go into Carlsbad, said Waste Management spokeswoman Jordan Cole, with the other locations be-

ing determined.

Cities can save money with the machine, because compacted garbage doesn't have to be collected as frequently, said Ken Ryan,

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district manager for Waste Management of North County.

Ryan and Oceanside officials gathered Wednesday afternoon at the pier to explain how the compactor works. A solar panel covered by a transparent panel on the top provides the power, which is stored in a 12-volt battery that can run the

compactor for several days. The trash can be squeezed into just 20 percent of its normal volume.

If cities want to buy, the purchase price for each compactor is in the "four figures," Ryan said, declining to be specific. They typically repay the cost, in the form of labor savings, in about two years, he said.

The compactor has safety features so it won't compress the trash when a hand is placed inside. Because it's enclosed, animals can't get in-

side, and the waste is kept from getting outside. To discourage vandalism, it's bolted down.

The solar-powered compactor is part of Oceanside's effort to be environmentally friendly, said Colleen Foster, a management analyst with the city.

Another part of Oceanside's environmental push takes place this Thursday, when thousands of reusable shopping bags will be given out at various stores in the city.

The "Day Without A Bag" event, also being observed in Encinitas and Solana Beach, is meant to encourage shoppers to stop using disposable plastic and paper bags in favor of reusables.

Reusable bags will be handed out at: El Corazon Senior Center, Oceanside Senior Center, Beach Recreation Center, Melba Bishop Recreation Center, Balderrama Recreation Center, Libby Lake Resource Center, San Luis Rey Recreation Center; and Crown Heights Recre-

ation Center.

Also, The Friends of the Oceanside Public Library will donate 100 reusable bags, to be given away at the Civic Center and Mission Branch libraries and at the Downtown Farmers Market from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Additional bags may be purchased from the Friends of the Library for \$1 each.

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