

## **Changes to curbside trash collection aim to increase recycling**

The landscape on trash day will soon be changing and the days of streets lined with plastic bags filled with grass and leaves destined for the landfill will be gone. Instead, these resources will be heading for composting to give them a second life. Starting January 1, 2012 trash haulers serving Johnson County will no longer be picking up yard waste for landfill disposal. Also, haulers will be required to offer curbside recycling and pay-as-you-throw pricing to residential customers.

If your household recycles as much as you possibly can, you won't see much change. All households will be able to place an unlimited amount of recyclable materials - paper, cardboard, plastic containers, aluminum and steel cans - at the curb. If your household does not currently subscribe to curbside collection of recycling, you will begin receiving this service no later than January 2012.

The pay-as-you throw system sets a base volume for how much a residential household can throw away each week. It will cost extra to throw more trash away. Under the pay-as-you-throw system, those who recycle as much as they can are rewarded by staying within their weekly trash volume.

Yard waste makes up 11 percent of what is disposed in local landfills by County residents. Yard waste (leaves, grass clippings, brush and limbs) will need to be in compostable bags or bundled appropriately. Arrangements need to be made with your hauler for picking up yard waste for composting or mulching. Or, households may choose to manage your yard waste on site by mulching, composting or self-hauling the material to a composting facility.

Yard waste can be effectively managed onsite. K-State Research and Extension encourages "grass-cycling" by leaving grass clippings on the lawn when using a mulching mower. Grass clippings will return needed nitrogen to the soil and will not lead to thatch. Fall leaves can also be managed with a mulching mower and left on the yard to enhance the development of healthy soils.

Residents may prefer to manage their leaves and grass clippings on their properties in a controlled backyard compost pile. Backyard composting is a recommended way to manage leaves and grass throughout the year and in return, the finished compost can be used on flower beds, gardens, and the lawn.

For more information contact the Johnson County Environmental Department, [www.jocorecycles.org](http://www.jocorecycles.org) or 913-715-6900.