



City of Piney Point Village

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To: All Piney Point Residents **Date: August 27, 2008**
From: Karey Bresenhan, Mayor, City of Piney Point Village

As a British newspaper recently reported, "*The Garbage Fairy is Dead.*"

It's true. The days when you always had the same garbage collectors, when they knew exactly where you hung the key to your backyard gate and the name of the family dog, when you'd get thank-you notes for the cookies you left for them at Christmas, when the price stayed low...sigh. Just like the gas wars you may remember (for the lowest price per gallon, not the highest!), *those days are gone.*

Here in Piney Point Village, we know all about the demise of the Garbage Fairy. We've been through three companies in the last year, with all the ensuing aggravation and complaints that lack of continuity inevitably creates. We've had to face significantly higher rates when our contract came up for renewal at the end of July (we renewed it for one month to give us time to put the contract out for bid) and a cut-back in our services. Neither was a good option, but both were imminent. We learned to our regret that providing "boutique" (new word for back-door) services is fast going out of style.

But, I'm happy to report that **as of Sept. 1**, Piney Point will have a new professional sanitation company--**VF Waste Services**--that we believe will return us to a state of happy co-existence with our garbage, our back-door pick-up, and our high expectations. And this new company may make it possible for us to offer **recycling** once again--we have six months to make that decision. Thanks to Councilmen Peter Nemeth and Henry Kollenberg for negotiating this contract.

VF Waste Services is a family-owned company; the owner is Valentine Freyres. He prides himself on the impeccable condition of his garbage trucks, and Councilmen John Ebeling and Julie Goodall checked out his claim and enthusiastically agree with that assessment. We asked questions about his work force. We were pleased to discover that he takes pride in *paying 100% of his employees' health insurance*--that's an important consideration today in keeping loyal, trained employees.

The price has gone up--no question. There's a fuel increase on top of the per house price. And we're going to have to make some necessary adjustments in how we handle our trash bags, garbage cans, etc. The Garbage Fairy is indeed dead. But read on to find out what we're getting in his place.

* **Twice weekly boutique garbage pick-up**—if you now have Monday/Thursday pick-up, you will still have Monday/Thursday pick-up and the same for those of you with Tuesday/Friday pick-ups. If we go to recycling, which I hope we will, then the recycling pick-up would be on Wednesdays. *Evaluation: no change*

* **Trash to be located at any "suitable back-door location accessible to the collection crews during normal business hours (7 am to 6 pm)."** Collection crews are not responsible for picking up trash located behind locked or closed gates or inside garages or homes. If your garbage is now located in such a place, *you must find a more accessible location.* This applies to everyone; exceptions cannot be negotiated. *Evaluation: some change*

* **Holidays:** Garbage and trash will not be picked up on New Year's Day, Good Friday, Independence Day (4th of July), Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. *Evaluation: no change*

* **No holiday makeup will be provided.** *Evaluation: some change*

* **Up to 12 items may be picked up from each house on each pick-up day.** "Items" include bags, bundles of limbs and yard trimmings, garbage cans, etc. *Evaluation: change*

* **20-cubic yard garbage trucks will be used for the majority of Piney Point garbage pick-up;** however mini pick-up trucks will be used for streets where the other size truck cannot be operated safely or turned around. No more than 17 streets will be serviced by the mini pick-ups without an increase in cost. *Evaluation: change*

* **Pick-up of "bulky waste"** will be on the second collection day. "Bulky waste" includes such items as refrigerators without the refrigerant, mattresses, appliances, furniture, etc.

* **Missed collections should be reported directly to VF Waste Services at (713) 787-9790 between 8 am and 5 pm.**

* **Providing these services will cost us approximately \$28.84 per household per month,** up from approximately \$22.00 per month per household under our previous contract. NOTE: To put this figure in perspective, "curbside" garbage collection in the City of Houston runs approximately \$10.00 per month. The luxury of "back-door" garbage collection is an extremely labor intensive process. We all need to do our part to help our contractor save time wherever possible, since ultimately, this will help us save money.

Nobody likes change, but what I have outlined here are really minor changes that allow us to keep the important parts of our garbage collection services. We worked hard to come up with this solution, and I think it's a good one. I hope you agree.