



School effort slashes waste

Expanding recycling will be considered

By Andrew Atterbury

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SAN ANGELO, Texas —Fort Concho Elementary School has diverted 66 percent of its classroom trash since the school began recycling in January.

The school partnered with Texas Disposal Systems as the pilot San Angelo Independent School District campus to recycle with the Austin-based company, which submitted a bid Friday to manage the city's waste collection services.

"Our push right now ... is looking at ways to improve our trash and bring recycling to the neighborhoods of San Angelo," said Principal Lori Barton.

One of Fort Concho's Texas Research Institute for Young Scholars teams, The Go Green Group, shared its recycling knowledge with students, parents and Texas Disposal employees Friday morning in hopes of creating a districtwide recycling program.

The group mentioned that San Angelo's landfill has about 13 years of life remaining, and recycling can reduce trash service expenses and build a better environment for people in the future.

"Recycling is cheaper than the disposal of trash, it helps the environment, and it is the right thing to do," said third-grader Jack McLaughlin.

Before recycling came to Fort Concho, classrooms filled three trash cans each day, the group reported. Now it takes about two weeks to fill trash cans while the recycling bin overflows with paper, plastic, cardboard, aluminum and cans.

Paper makes up about 90 percent of SAISD waste, according to the group.

Texas Disposal has assumed trash collection duties in surrounding towns such as Mertzon and Sterling City. The company manages Angelo State University services, and Fort Concho students have pitched it to the SAISD administration.

Superintendent Carol Ann Bonds said she is interested in setting up a recycling plan for the district next school year once logistics such as cost and staffing are hashed out. SAISD will consider waste collection bids later this year.

"I want us to pursue this and find out how and with whom we can do it," Bonds said.

Friday was the final day for companies to submit proposals for San Angelo's waste collection services. Texas Disposal and Republic Services, the city's current provider, are among a handful of companies submitting proposals. Fort Concho alumni and District 3 City Councilman Johnny Silvas attended Friday's presentation, saying the city is taking a hard look at choosing a disposal service.

"We're hearing the citizens," Silvas said. "They want recycling and they want good service. It's not so much price as it is quality."



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