

**City and County Beat**

## **City starts composting pilot program**

**By Sarah Coppola | Tuesday, April 20, 2010, 10:57 AM**

The City of Austin wants more residents to try composting their food, and will offer incentives to make that happen.

Residents who take a free composting class offered by the city, start composting and use only 30-gallon garbage collection carts — the smallest of three sizes the city offers — will be rebated 75 percent of the cost of a composting system, up to \$75.

The Solid Waste Services Department has \$75,000 available for the rebates, which are part of a four-month pilot program. The first composting class will be held Saturday at 4 p.m. at the Sustainability Stage at the Green Living Expo at the Austin Convention Center, Solid Waste Services division manager Jessica King said. Residents don't need to sign up in advance, and other class dates will be posted soon at [www.austinrecycles.com](http://www.austinrecycles.com), she said.

The city also launched an Earth-Day-themed program today called One Green Step that asks residents to make simple changes to reduce their carbon footprint.

“All of us have a role to play” in environmental protection, Mayor Lee Leffingwell said at a morning announcement. He was joined by video game designer Richard Garriott, who spent time in space two years ago and said seeing Earth from that vantage point made him want to live a greener life. He said he has re-insulated and added photovoltaic panels to his home and replaced gas-guzzling vehicles with more efficient ones.

Garriott and the mayor will appear in print, radio and TV ads promoting the program, King said. Solid Waste Services is also holding a One Green Step event from 2 to 5 p.m. May 1 at the Pan Am Recreation Center where residents can learn more about the program. Solid Waste Services will spend \$60,000 on that event and the marketing efforts, King said.