

Waste Management begins cart exchanges for customers

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INDIAN RIVER COUNTY — Waste Management this week began taking back thousands of new recycling and garbage carts from residents who want something either bigger or smaller.

About 2,100 customers have requested different-sized garbage carts, with about 1,300 requesting different-sized recycling carts, Waste Management spokeswoman Amy Boyson said. Since Tuesday, about 600 new carts have been delivered, she said.

The company is hoping cart swaps will go more smoothly than the initial cart distributions in the fall, which were plagued with problems.

Customers are allowed one free exchange for each recycling and garbage cart. Subsequent exchanges will cost \$30 per cart.

Requested exchanges should be made over the next few weeks, Boyson said. Deliveries are being made in the order of the routes, not in the order of when customers called for an exchange.

The time allowed residents to get through the holiday season, giving them a better idea of their needs, Boyson said. Requests for exchanges can be made at any time. Residents also can ask for a second free recycling cart. When Indian River County moved to single-stream recycling in October, residents received a 64-gallon recycling and a 96-gallon garbage cart. Waste Management, which became the sole waste hauler for unincorporated

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1A Indian River County and Fellsmere, asked residents to try out the new carts for three months before asking for replacements.

The three-month period also gave Waste Management time to prepare, after the initial cart distribution system was besieged with complaints from customers about missed garbage pickups and missing carts.

Within a few weeks of hearing continual complaints last year, county commissioners began considering administrative charges and taking a portion of the company's \$4.1 million performance bond, which Waste Management posted as a requirement of its contract with the county. Eventually, Waste Management agreed to give all customers a \$9.68 one-month credit because of the issues.