



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Waste collection changes in county buildings yield improved efficiency, substantial savings

KENOSHA – A seemingly minor change to how office waste is collected is translating into a meaningful savings for Kenosha County.

The county in October implemented new waste guidelines for its employees, asking those who work in facilities across county government to take the small step of separating out food and liquid waste from their office wastebaskets.

Unwanted food and drink is now to be deposited in centralized collection bins that have been placed in each office area. Wastebaskets under desks are now emptied only once a week, rather than daily, and employees are asked to empty their own under-desk recycling containers into a centralized bin on an as-needed basis.

The anticipated savings, according to Mike Schrandt, county facilities manager: \$135,000 per year.

This change is the county's latest effort to implement lean operations practices – to rethink how routine tasks are executed, with an eye toward getting the best bang for taxpayers' dollars.

“I commend Mike Schrandt and our Public Works staff for their willingness to think outside the box, not settling for doing things the way we've always done them because that's how we've always done them,” said County Executive Jim Kreuser. “As you see here, small changes to how we do our day-to-day work can make a real difference from efficiency and cost standpoints.”

Schrandt said under the old waste collection system – in which food was mixed in with other office trash, requiring wastebaskets to be emptied daily – each of the county's custodians spent at least an hour and a half each night collecting waste. That computes to about 2,800 man hours per year, Schrandt said.

That time will now be spent taking better care of the county's facilities, Schrandt said.

“With that savings at every building, we’ll now take that time and use it to do cleaning in areas where they didn’t have enough time to do it the right way. More vacuuming, more dusting, more carpet cleaning – things like that,” Schrandt said.

Other lean processes implemented in county facilities in recent years include an effort to improve the efficiency of snow removal on the downtown Civic Center campus by uniting custodian teams and maintenance staff from different buildings. The Facilities Division has also saved the county more than \$50,000 per year in energy costs through Focus on Energy plans converting lighting to more efficient systems.

Kreuser thanked county employees for their innovation, and their willingness to adapt to lean practices.

“These continual improvements benefit county employees and the public,” Kreuser said. “Lean processes only help us to better provide the services people need, in a cost-effective way.”

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