

Recycling bins to sprout downtown

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Downtown Omaha will go green this spring.

Mayor Jim Suttle announced Monday that the city will partner with private businesses to start a downtown recycling project. The Omaha Public Works Department will handle recycling and trash collection for the 50 bins, which will be placed around downtown.

"We've chosen downtown as the testing ground since it is a part of the city where there is a high volume of foot traffic and where recyclables are not currently collected," Suttle said during a press conference Monday.

Instructions on the types of material that can be recycled will be printed on top of the bins. Glass bottles will not be accepted.

Under the new program, Free Green Can Nebraska will provide the bins to the city at no cost and will collect fees from businesses who serve as sponsors. The project is expected to begin about March 1.

Pam Brown, a former state senator and a partner in Free Green Can Ne-

braska, said Omaha's strong curbside recycling program made the city a good candidate for a downtown recycling project.

Use of the downtown recycling bins will be monitored through the end of 2010, Suttle said.

If successful, the program will be expanded to other parts of the city in 2011.

The bins each stand about 4½ feet high, weigh about 100 pounds and are fitted with GPS tracking chips. The bins each have one side for recyclable materials and one side for trash.

Sponsorship costs — depending on a bin's location — are between \$350 and \$500 per year. ConAgra Foods, Union Pacific, CBS Home Real Estate, Atchley Ford and the DLR Group have already become sponsors.

Suttle said there will be no cost to Omaha taxpayers because the Public Works Department will incorporate collections from the bins into its current routes.

The program was developed with the support of the Downtown Improvement District.



Starting next month, 50 recycling bins will be placed around downtown Omaha. The bins stand about 4½ feet high and weigh about 100 pounds.

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