

Cities try to ease residents' fears about RFID bins

By Shawn Wright
WRN reporter

It sits quietly on the recycling cart, tracking when a container is on the curb.

It knows who's being a good recycler and who's not.

But some think radio frequency identification (RFID) chips are part of an Orwellian conspiracy.

"It's a passive chip; it does nothing except know where it

lives," said Mike Santmire, director of the street and solid waste department in Mount Holly, N.C. "It doesn't know what goes in it, what kind of beer you drink, what your secret fantasies are. All it knows is where it lives and when it's emptied."

Mount Holly has had RFID chips on its recycling carts since January 2010 and was the first city in Gaston County to have single-stream recycling, Sant-

mire said. Even neighboring Charlotte followed Mount Holly.

But in Gastonia, N.C., about 13 miles west of Mount Holly, the fear of government control or purported punishment for not recycling worried some residents.

In December, about 27,000 new 96-gallon recycling carts equipped with RFID chips were set to be delivered. That is, until the City Council voted to stop delivery, citing concerns about vio-

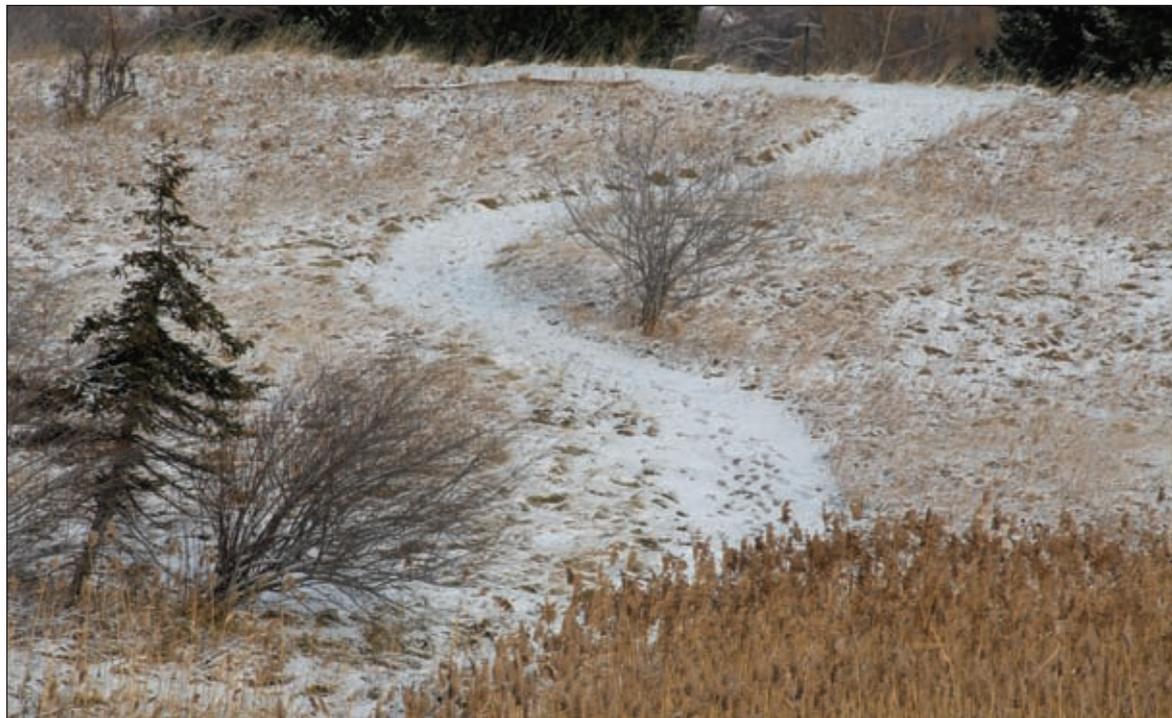
lations of privacy and the possibility that monitoring of recycling could lead to fines or penalties for uncooperative residents.

"The bottom line is RFID chips are not a GPS chip. It does not track you; it does not track a location," said Neil Mitchell, director of marketing for RFID chip and reader manufacturer Alien Technology Inc. "Unless it's described very specifically in layman's terms, people could jump

to an incorrect conclusion that this is able to track you. It can't."

Gastonia's cease and desist order made its recycling contractor, Republic Services of Charlotte, remove the RFID chips at a cost of \$24,000. At \$1 per cart, the city had signed a five-year contract with Republic to lease 24,000 carts with the RFID chips.

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Courtesy, David Spiering, Tift Nature Preserve

A hiking trail meanders through the mounds of a former landfill at the Tift Nature Preserve in Buffalo, N.Y. About 2 million cubic yards of municipal solid waste is buried on 42 acres of the 264-acre preserve.

Wasted spaces no more

Former landfills, hazardous waste sites reclaimed

By Vince Bond Jr.
WRN reporter

At first glance, there's nothing out of the ordinary about the gentle roaming hills at the Tift Nature Preserve in Buffalo, N.Y.

The grass-covered mounds, which make up 42 acres at the 264-acre preserve, are a distinct shift from the otherwise flat terrain, with the highest one providing a view of the Buffalo skyline to the north and across Lake Erie

to Ontario from the second highest point in the city, 634 feet.

Yet beneath the surface of this picturesque scene lies 2 million cubic yards of municipal solid waste. It was unloaded at the site from 1973 to 1975 when the Buffalo Sewer Authority transported it from nearby Squaw Island.

Motivated citizens who wanted to protect the area's habitat successfully petitioned the city to convert the land into a preserve and restrict the landfill to a small

portion of the area, according to David Spiering, a Tift ecologist.

The landfill was enclosed; flowers and trees were planted; and wetlands expanded at the site, which became a part of the Buffalo Museum of Natural Science in 1982.

The preserve is now a haven for birds – more than 200 species have been spotted – and an assortment of other creatures such as beaver,

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Doubling in a decade?

Waste Connections predicts growth, but it may not come via Veolia deal

By Jim Johnson
WRN senior reporter

Waste Connections Inc., fresh off a corporate headquarters move to Texas, has plans to keep its foot on the accelerator when it comes to company growth.

The Woodlands, Texas-based solid waste company, which relocated from Folsom, Calif., late last year, expects to more than double in size over the next 10 years, CEO Ronald J. Mittelstaedt said during a conference call to discuss earnings.

Word of the company's growth goal comes as Waste Connections cracked an annual revenue milestone in 2011, topping \$1.5 billion for the first time.

Doubling that figure would make Waste Connections at least a \$3 billion company by 2021.

Choosing the Houston area for the company's new corporate home, the CEO said, sets the stage for continued expansion in the years ahead.

"We are all excited about this move, because this centrally located business and tax-friendly environment should ideally position us for our next growth phase, as we expect to more than double the size of the company



MARIA KIRCH / WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

over the next decade," he said.

Waste Connections expects revenue to increase to \$1.615 billion this year, up about 7% over 2011, according to Chief Financial Officer Worthing Jackman. This year's growth will be fueled, in part, by the pending acquisition of Alaska Waste.

But the company also is looking beyond that deal.

"We believe acquisition activity could remain strong over the next few years due to increasing capital requirements in many markets to further segment the

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Assault on trash

A New York state legislator has proposed a bill which would make it a felony to assault a garbage collector in NYC. Page 12

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Municipal recycling survey results

WRN's annual recycling survey of large cities in North America. Pages 13-20

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