

Riverside installs two solar-powered trash cans, and more are on the way

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The Press-Enterprise

Two new trash cans that popped up in the Riverwalk area this month are a preview of what's coming to the rest of Riverside this summer.

The cans are about the size of typical 35-gallon trash bins, but they're equipped with a solar-powered compactor that crushes the waste, so they can be emptied less often. That saves truck trips, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions, proponents say.

A solar panel under a protective casing is on the can's top. Trash goes in the front, and once it reaches a set level inside it gets smashed down. The cans compress about 200 gallons of trash into a 40- to 60-pound cube, according to city information.

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SOLAR COMPACTORS: Riverside will soon install 30 solar-powered trash cans that compact the waste so they need to be emptied less often. Two cans are in place in the Riverwalk area.

Front view

- Weight: 300 lbs.
- Bin volume: 35 gallons
- Photovoltaic system output: 30 watts
- Compressed trash: 1250 lbs.
- Width: 26.7"

Inside view

- Power & electronics
- Compaction ram
- Electronics to sense waste level
- Leak-proof bin

How it works

- Trash falls into bin. The electronic eye senses the height of the trash and automatically triggers compaction when needed.
- The ram compacts waste into the bin, making room for more. It reduces the trash to 25% of its original volume.

Source: www.southwest.com

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The city estimates it will save 1,665 gallons of fuel per year from reduced trips to empty the new cans, and workers will be able to spend about 575 hours on other projects. Sometime this summer, 30 more cans will be installed around Riverside.

The bins the city bought also have attached bottle and can recycling containers. They're made of galvanized steel covered with a polycarbonate shield that is "almost graffiti-proof," said Steve Glynn, community relations manager for **Waste Management**, which is a distributor of the cans.

Palm Springs has a few of the solar compactors, and a number of Southern California cities have ordered them, Glynn said, but Riverside will be one of the first cities to roll out more than a handful.

The two installed cans are on Riverwalk Parkway at Pierce Street and Collett Avenue.

All together, the cans cost about \$167,680. Most of the money came from a federal stimulus grant, and the rest is from a Riverwalk property assessment fund, said city public works manager Cindie Perry.

The solar trash cans are part of a federally funded green initiative the City Council

approved in 2009. The plan also calls for installing LED streetlights, offering more rebates for energy-saving home improvements and putting in a solar-powered charging station for electric golf carts at a water quality plant.

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