

Waste Clean Up this week

The Municipality of Anchorage and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation are sponsoring the Hazardous Waste Clean-Up, Monday, May 6 - Saturday, May 11, for the collection of small quantities of hazardous wastes from households and businesses.

Up to three 55-gallon drums of hazardous waste will be accepted free of charge at the Municipal Shredding Facility at 54th Avenue and Juneau Street, said Joel Grunwaldt, Director, Solid Waste Services. The hazardous waste clean-up is one of the few opportunities available to the public for safe disposal of hazardous wastes in Anchorage. Hazardous wastes collected by the clean-up program will be analyzed by an on-site chemist, packaged, transported and disposed of at an Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) approved hazardous waste facility. There are no EPA approved facilities for disposal of hazardous wastes in Alaska at this time.

All hazardous wastes must be shipped to the Lower 48 for processing and disposal. A business producing one 55-gallon drum of hazardous waste can be charged over \$1,000 for proper disposal of the waste. Lack of facilities and high disposal cost make it necessary for Anchorage to be responsible and manage its hazardous waste deposits.

Hazardous wastes which should be taken to the clean-up include unwanted pesticides, paint thinners and preservatives, oil-based paints, waste oil, old medicines, poisons, solvents, and disinfectants, for example. Explosives, reactives or pressurized aerosol cans will not be accepted. Many of these items may be found in garages or storage areas and this program enables residents to dispose of these unwanted hazardous products.

Last year over 60,000 pounds of hazardous wastes were collected during the hazardous waste clean-up program. Included in last year's clean-up were 1,500 pounds of almost pure PCB's brought in by a resident who found the material in a house he

had purchased. Many of the wastes collected during the clean-up most likely would have been improperly dumped in the garbage or poured down the sewer if the program was not available. Improper disposal of these wastes can potentially endanger people, wildlife and the environment.

To participate in the clean-up, gather your potentially toxic wastes in secure containers and bring them to the Municipal Shredding Facility, Monday, May 6- Saturday, May 11, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Questions regarding whether a material is hazardous or in the proper container can be answered by the Municipality of Anchorage, 561-1906, or the Alaska Department of Conservation, 274-2533.