



Turning Waste Into Resources

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Last Chance Mercantile to Remain Closed Until Further Notice
MRWMD budgetary constraints restrict non-essential services

(Monterey County, CA) Monterey Regional Waste Management’s (MRWMD) popular Last Chance Mercantile re-use store will remain closed until further notice due to budgetary constraints. Last Chance Mercantile is a beloved institution and key to the District’s mission of “turning waste into resources” by fulfilling one of the seven R’s of sustainability—reuse. Unfortunately, the store has historically operated at a loss, a situation unlikely to change under current conditions of heightened health safety. Thus, the store will remain closed while the District reassesses the best path forward.

In recent months, the District has had to determine which programs and services are essential and comply with shelter in place orders. Now that the economy is slowly opening back up, they are seeing the financial effects of the shutdown and are making these assessments on a longer-term basis.

“The impact of COVID-19 has hit all sectors of our local economy, particularly in our local hospitality industry, and those downturns are impacting the MRWMD as well,” stated General Manager Tim Flanagan. “Our disposal and recycling volumes have decreased significantly. Since mid-March our revenues have dipped 15-20% below normal. This relates to a projected \$4+ million reduction in revenue compared to last fiscal year. As such, we can no longer financially support non-essential programs that operate at a deficit. Like local government and industry, we have been forced to make difficult decisions in favor of the financial sustainability of the District and the essential disposal and recycling services we provide to the community.”

Part of the Last Chance Mercantile, the CRV-redemption Bottle and Can Buyback Center will also remain closed, but permanently. The District has offered CRV redemption to the community since 2011, but it was costing them to do so.

“Our hope is that we can aid the opening of one or more CRV redemption centers in local communities that are more accessible to customers than the one we had on-site was. Another entity would be able to access funding from redemption, which we are not eligible to receive. Thinking outside the box we

realized it could be a win-win for the community and a non-profit looking for a source of revenue,” Flanagan commented.

In addition to closing the Last Chance Mercantile and Bottle and Can Buyback Center, MRWMD has also made budget cuts for FY 20/21 through offering early retirement packages to eligible employees, laying off non-essential positions, and senior and management staff have agreed to pay cuts and wage increase freezes. MRWMD is being creative in seeking new sources of revenue.

MRWMD Board of Directors and staff will examine possible paths forward to an eventual reopening of the Last Chance Mercantile with the store operating more economically, while fulfilling the District’s mission.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Monterey Regional Waste Management District (MRWMD) is located just north of Marina at 14201 Del Monte Blvd., Monterey County, CA 93933-1670, serving a population of approximately 170,000 in 853 square miles, including the cities of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Sand City, Seaside, and the unincorporated areas of Big Sur, Carmel Highlands, Carmel Valley, Castroville, Corral De Tierra, Laguna Seca, Moss Landing, Pebble Beach, San Benancio, and Toro Park. Call 831-384-5313 for information or visit www.mrwmd.org

MRWMD is *not* the curbside service provider; contact GreenWaste Recovery, Waste Management Inc., or Monterey City Disposal for information about curbside pickup services.