

Illegal dumping riles KC Council

City turns up effort to prosecute 'vile, filthy' lawbreakers

By KEVIN HOFFMANN
The Kansas City Star

Forgive City Councilman Troy Nash if it sounds as if he despises those who dump old tires, magazines and worn-out furniture in Kansas City's vacant lots.

He does.

"They're vile. They're filthy. They're like rats," Nash said after a news conference Wednesday to announce a new program aimed at catching illegal trash dumpers. "I'm fed up with it, and I'm going to do something about it."

Nash said he and other city officials were declaring war on those who dump trash illegally and announced the kickoff of a program called Roar — Rat on a Rat.

"Mr. and Mrs. Illegal Dumper, we want to make an example out of you.... You will pay if you dump illegally in Kansas City," Nash said.

The program encourages residents to report illegal dumping by offering rewards for tips that lead to arrests or prosecution.

"The weapons you will need for this war are a cellular phone," Nash said holding up a silver, palm-sized phone. "A pair of binoculars, which you can probably borrow from a friend, and a camera."

Recent cuts to the city's budget, Nash said, have limited the ability of city officials to investigate reports of illegal dumping and to clean up littered vacant lots.

Kansas City residents have always been encouraged to report illegal dumping, but with the new program they could be paid for it. Nash said the city would set up a reward program based on information that a resident supplies, the type of dumping that is witnessed, and whether the information leads to an arrest and conviction.

The city is focusing on areas where people chronically dump unwanted items, such as a vacant lot near 24th Street and Troost Avenue



Photos by JEFF ROBERSON/The Kansas City Star

After a news conference at an illegal dump site on Forest Avenue south of 24th Street, Kansas City Councilman Troy Nash declared war on unlawful dumping Wednesday, saying, "I'm fed up with it, and I'm going to do something about it."



Troy Nash

that on Wednesday was littered with furniture, boxes, tires, broken glass and piles of other junk.

As part of the program, Nash and neighborhood advocate Rosemary S. Lowe will set up a task force to organize the program and monitor its

Seeking solutions

To report illegal dumping in Kansas City, call the city's hot line at (816) 513-3485. Be prepared to provide a description of the person doing the dumping, a vehicle description and a license plate number. Photographs are helpful.

success. Police and fire officials will participate in the program as well as other city agencies and neighborhood groups.

Once the program is in full swing, volunteers will lead weekly patrols of known dump sites to monitor illegal activity. Officials also will visit area schools and teach students the importance of clean neighborhoods.

Greg Brady, an investigator with the city's environmental management department, estimated that 115 illegal dump sites are scattered across the city, many in Nash's 3rd District.

The city has won convictions in

more than 45 court cases involving illegal dumping, Brady said. The maximum fine for illegal dumping is \$1,000 and most infractions will cost hundreds of dollars.

Brady encouraged anyone who witnesses illegal dumping to call the city's hot line at (816) 513-3485. He cautioned residents not to confront anyone they see dumping trash, but instead to write down information such as what the person looks like, vehicle description and license plate number. That information can be left on the city's hot line 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

What irritates many city officials is that the city offers resources for unwanted trash, such as large-item pickups, tire drop-offs and hazardous material waste-collection sites.

"The worst part about it is that the city has resources to collect most of it (at minimal or no charge)," Brady said.

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