

MOVIE

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its theaters one at a time.

The Blue Fox Drive-In has been holding a fundraiser for months to try and raise the approximately \$80,000 cost for the new projector.

Darrell Bratt, owner of the Blue Fox Drive-In, said the community has been very supportive and the fundraiser contributed around 80 percent of the cost.

He took out a loan to pay the remainder.

He is still raising money through T-shirt and sweat-shirt sales.

The Blue Fox Drive-In is closed for several weeks through December.

He said the projector will be installed Jan. 8 in time for the re-opening scheduled for Jan. 11.

The Clyde Theatre, which operates in Langley, switched to a digital system one year ago.

Owner Blake Willeford said he wanted to get the

conversion out of the way early so he wouldn't have problems finding equipment or electricians to install it.

He said the digital technology has made his duties as a projectionist easier and he can spend more time serving customers.

The customers seem to be enjoying the quality of the showings too.

"There's no such thing as scratched film anymore," Willeford said.

He noted that he hoped he would eventually save money on shipping costs because the hard drive is lighter than the film canisters; however, the distributor has been over-nighting digital films that has proven more costly.

With the transition to digital, the movie theaters are left with old projectors that have been operating reliably for decades but have become obsolete.

Bratt said he isn't sure what he is going to do with his old equipment yet.

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Many of the naysayers said they were avid recyclers but didn't like various aspects of the program.

One of the more common gripes, and one of the primary reasons a nearly identical program pitched in 2007 did not move forward, was that Island Disposal is requiring it be mandatory for all of its customers.

Jennifer Lesko said she is a regular recycler but the every-other-week service will cost her an extra \$140 a year — the final cost has yet to be determined — and that's money she can't afford.

To get out of paying the fee, she said she will likely cancel her service and self-haul.

"It makes me feel poorer than I am that I actually have to do this," Lesko said.

Similarly, Island Recycling owner David Campbell said he was not against the idea of a curbside program.

In fact, he called himself a recycling "whacko" who's

been doing it religiously for 40 years.

Like Lesko, he said his customers commonly complain that they will quit their garbage service and self-haul because they don't want to pay the extra fee, especially when glass will not be accepted.

He and several others, such as Central Whidbey resident Bill Bradkin, expressed skepticism about recycling statistics and the expected results of an implemented curbside service.

Yet, there were many others at the meeting who testified passionately in favor of the program.

Coupeville resident Gary Piazzon, an outspoken advocate for the environment, talked about the United States role in global warming and the need to take action.

"If we can reduce our carbon dioxide emissions ... we're going to do a great deal for our future and our kids' futures," Piazzon said.

Coupeville resident Cathy d'Almeida said this was the

first place she'd lived in 20 years that didn't offer curbside recycling, a fact she said was "appalling."

She was not alone. Several others called it "shocking" and "embarrassing."

But many more said the time for discussing the issue and trying to find a perfect program had come to an end.

"It's time we stop kicking this can down the road," said Bob Walters, a Langley resident. "We've been doing this for years."

Ken Kovalenko, district manager for Waste Connections, parent company of Island Disposal, also addressed the crowd.

He pointed out that while his firm is the franchised hauler for Whidbey Island, they are a private business and a curbside service is something of a financial gamble.

"I know I'll lose customers, but I'm willing to take that risk because I believe it's the right thing to do," Kovalenko said.

He also debunked a claim that the company will have to run "loose" or un-compacted loads of recyclables to off-island facilities.

Kovalenko said the recyclables Island Disposal does handle now are bailed at a facility just South of Coupeville.

After hearing more than

an hour of public testimony, the board moved forward with little discussion.

Both Homola and Price Johnson acknowledged the shortcomings of the program but were resolute in moving forward.

Homola said she'd been taught long ago that when "you soil your nest, you clean it," and while she will be out of a job by the end of the month, she is ready to pay more each month to do her part in reducing carbon emissions.

"I'm willing to do that because I think it's that important," Homola said.

Price Johnson said she wrestled with the decision but ultimately believed the curbside program is in the best interest of Island County and its residents.

She ended with a quote from a constituent.

"There is nothing more conservative than conserving resources," she said. "It's a clear winner economically and environmentally."

The board's decision requires Island Disposal to launch the service within one year.

The hauler will submit a proposal to state regulators and a final cost will then be determined.

Kovalenko could not provide a start date but did say he hopes to roll out the program before Christmas of 2013.

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