

**Leaf-fest '13 nets 2,174 tons of leaves**

Ideal conditions helped Coeur d'Alene city street crews haul 820 dump-truck loads—2,174 tons—of leaves this fall. That's up from 1,739 tons hauled last year. "It was a perfect fall with not a lot of moisture, and then heavy frost, wind and rain, which helped the leaves drop early and contributed to the higher totals," said city street superintendent Tim Martin. Many trees are maturing in subdivisions that were built in the past 14 years, which also led to the amount of tonnage. Did you know that the city's leaf pick-up program is more than just a convenience to citizens? It also protects the environment by limiting the amount of phosphorus entering local waterways. Phosphorus, found in leaves, is the nutrient that is most essential to aquatic plant growth. This means that if aquatic plants, such as algae, have excess phosphorus to adsorb, they can grow out of control. Coeur d'Alene wastewater superintendent Sid Frederickson estimates more than 70,000 pounds of phosphorus was kept out of local waterways by hauling leaves to the landfill rather than allowing them to seep through storm drains into the local waterways.