

Computers put to good use

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THE NEWS-HERALD

TAYLOR — It's out with the old, in with the new and a charitable donation thrown in for good measure.

William Dudek, the city's information technology director, said he is elated he has found a free and easy way to dispose of the city's outdated computers.

The City Council voted July 15 to purchase 190 new computers and upgrade the city's PC system at a cost \$254,000.

When the new computers arrive, Dudek will donate most of the old ones to Dr. James Payne.

Payne is a Northville dentist, who, when he isn't in the office, can be found in his basement tinkering with computers.

He repairs computers and donates them to schools, handicapped individuals and charitable groups.

"I was looking for a way to get rid of the computers and not have to make repairs (before giving them away)," Dudek said.

And he said he wanted to donate the computers to a nonprofit agency.

So he hit the Internet and found Payne. It was a perfect fit for city, Dudek said.

His staff will delete the operating system from the computers and then turn them over to Payne, most likely in lots of 50, he said.

Many of the city's computers are obsolete and he received notice that Microsoft is no longer supporting the operating system the city has, Dudek said.

He is elated Payne wants the computers and will pick them up at City Hall.

Usually it costs about \$35 per PC and monitor to dispose of it, he said. Sending them back to the manufacturer would require the city to pay for the shipping.

Computer rebuilding is a skill built out of necessity for Payne. He delved into

the intricacies of the computers because he had purchased one for his office that kept crashing.

After a few service calls that didn't fix the problem, Payne decided to give it a try himself. He tinkered with his computer, took some courses in computer repair, word got around and he ended up with a second trade.

There have been 2,300 computers donated to him and he's rebuilt 540. He gave the rebuilt computers to private schools, handicapped individuals and charitable organization.

He donated computers to Have Christ Will Travel, a charitable organization that gave the computers to an orphanage in Africa and now he gets emails from Africa seeking free computers.

Many of the computers he receives are used for parts, he said.

Rebuilding a computer is a long process and he doesn't do it alone.

Scott Montgomery, a senior at the University of

Michigan, and Drake Davis, a retired psychologist, work with him in his basement fixing the computers.

Once the repairs are made, they test the computer to be sure it is working and won't break down.

Many times the hardware problems are very subtle, he said. They have utility programs to help diagnose what is wrong with the computer.

"We've gotten good at telling what will work and what is not going to work," Payne said.

When he donates a computer, Payne said his goal is to give a computer that will work for at least a year without breaking down.

Anyone wishing to donate a computer to Payne can contact him at jdscomputers@hotmail.com.

Some computers are just too old, Payne said. To be serviceable, he needs computers with at least 300 megahertz and Pentium II or better.