

Brookings wants to make ski hill out of garbage

BROOKINGS (AP) — Brookings residents are once again giving their worst in an attempt to make a mountain out of a molehill.

Tree branches, tires, mattresses, old furniture, even broken-down refrigerators, stoves and water heaters are going into the effort.

Someone decided 20 years ago that a 120-foot ski hill could be made out of garbage. Each year, during spring clean-up week, residents haul their unwanted, broken or out-of-date goods — in short, their junk — to the curb for free pickup by city crews.

Eventually — probably not before the year 2000 — the entire 160-acre landfill site will be converted into a city park, complete with ski hill and a 20-acre lake. A five-diamond softball complex is already under construction.

Park and Recreation Director Allyn Frerichs said a similar project worked in Iowa. "They called it Mt. Trashmore," he said.

Last year, the spring cleanup produced 415 truck, pickup or trailer loads of junk contributed to the mountain-making effort.

"It's kind of interesting that it gets better every year," said health officer Bob McGrath. "I think more people are taking advantage of it and they're taking stuff out that they don't necessarily need to have around anymore.

"I wonder how they've been able to store it all winter, and all of a sudden, there it is, and it fills the whole boulevard," McGrath said.

The ski hill might be ready sooner than expected. "I can see it happening, because we're finishing this tier off faster than we thought," McGrath said.

It might sound like a far-fetched idea, but McGrath calls it a practical idea.

"It's certainly a much cheaper method of building a ski slope than going out and getting it constructed in the normal method, whatever that would be."

The only problem might come in naming the recreational area. Would anyone want a mountain of garbage named after them?