



Times-Call photo by Todd Wharton

ABOVE: Debbie Conn runs Scoopy Doos, a dog-dropping cleanup business. Below, Conn picks up some dog droppings while working in a Longmont yard recently.

Pooper scooper troopers: Not just doo-doo

Entrepreneurs see future in cleaning up after dogs

By Kevin M. McCarthy
The Daily Times-Call

LONGMONT — Debbie Conn can honestly say that she puts up with more crap than just about anybody.

That's just what she does.

In fact, the motto for her business is that she'll provide her services "for people who love their pets but are tired of all their crap!"

Literally.

Conn runs a service that scoops the poop from your yard. She has operated Scoopy Doos for seven years, traveling to people's homes once a week to take away the droppings.

She's not the only one with the idea. There are several such services in Col-



orado.

Another local owner, Mike Rubin, runs the Poop Connection, along with a lawn service called Aladdin Lawns.

He said that back when he first started the lawn service in 1986, people would ask him to pick up after the dog before he cut the grass.

"The requests just kept on coming," he said. Rubin eventually made scooping poop a separate business. He cuts

grass a few days a week and also spends two days picking up after dogs.

Who would have guessed there are businesses like this throughout the U.S.? There's even a Web site (www.pooper-scooper.com) with an international directory of dog waste removal services, along with one business owner who tells the story of how he made a fortune from picking up poop from other people's pets.

There's even advice about starting your own dog poop pick-up business. Of course, getting into a business like that usually happens by accident.

Conn first got the idea from seeing the business for sale.

She saw a classified ad in the Longmont Daily Times-Call for a business opportunity of a dog poop pick-up operation. She jumped at the chance and has been dealing in dung ever since.

Nowadays, she starts early in the

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You just have to have a light heart and roll with it."

Mike Rubin, Poop Connection owner

POOP: It's a stinky job, but someone's got to do it

■ Continued from B1

morning and works only three days a week.

Conn said that the flexibility of a short week lets her stay free to cover all her clients in the event of bad weather.

And it gives her time to spend with her family and do other things, such as work on her garden.

Conn, 36, is originally from Arkansas. She has two sons and lives with her husband near Carter Lake.

At work, she drives around town in a white pick-up truck, which is quite popular with the flies, and carries around a couple of buckets of poop in the back along with her scooper, which is a dust pan bent sideways.

She said she takes the poop to a fertilizer company that recycles it. Her service is relatively inexpensive

at \$15 a month, so just about anybody can afford it, she said. Although most of her clients are in Longmont, she also goes to Louisville, Lafayette, Boulder, Niwot and Gunbarrel.

"It's worth it to me to pay someone to pick up the poop," said Carol Anderson, who has been a customer of Conn's for a long time.

Anderson has two dogs and runs a child-care center from home. She said it's better to pay someone to do it than to fight with her family to find someone to pick it up or do it herself.

"I do enough poop diapers. I don't need to do poop yards, too," she said. Even Conn admitted the job can be "pretty gross." But she said after doing it for a while, she feels like these dogs are her dogs.

"It's like changing your own kid's diapers," Conn said, not that it's always

easy.

Fall is the most difficult time to be a pooper scooper. The droppings are often indistinguishable from leaves on the ground at first glance, and the bottom of Conn's shoes take the brunt of the punishment.

And of course, she gets some strange looks when she tells people what she does.

"It's very humbling at times," Conn said.

She said people often don't believe her when she tells them what she does for a living.

"You pretty much have to spell it out for them," she said.

Rubin, who works in the Boulder and west Longmont area covering about 140 yards, said he often just tells people he has a pet service. If they press him for information, then he'll tell all about it.

His service has caused some problems, too. When he first picked up poop, a girlfriend broke up with him because she couldn't deal with having a boyfriend who dealt in poop.

But that was a long time ago. Now, he's planning a trip to Panama with his current girlfriend.

"My friends think it's a kick in the back side," he added.

Also, he's been told that he's saved dogs from being sent to the pound.

Rubin also said people have nearly gotten divorced over dog poop, and it's caused countless family rifts over who has to do the nasty task.

"Now, I'm the savior who comes in and takes care of the unpopular task," he said.

Rubin charges \$5 a week for up to two dogs, and people are billed monthly.

Rubin, 35, originally from New Hamp-

shire, has a farm in Longmont and one in Berthoud.

Lately, he's been stockpiling the poop there.

He has a friend who will take it to the dump for him every now and then.

There are things to watch out for though with the job, too.

"You have to have a real good disposition to get along with the dogs," said Ruben, who luckily has never been bitten.

He said when he's been around a female in heat, male dogs will jump all over him all day.

He said he's also had to watch out for students and renters, who sometimes take off from town before paying their bills.

Of course, he gets prank phone calls and people make jokes too.

"You just have to have a light heart and roll with it," Rubin said.

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