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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Removes Over 147 Million Pounds of Trash Over Three Decades from Landscape

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its local affiliates and partners have been working hard since the organizations inception in 1990. Over the three decades that they've been in business, more than 2.5 million volunteers have engaged in community improvement events that have resulted in the removal of over 147 million pounds of trash, 11 million pounds of electronics and 999,959 tires from the beautiful Pennsylvania landscape. In fact, each year volunteers remove over 7 million pounds of trash and tires from our roads, waterways, parks and trails.

Unfortunately, there is still more work to do. According to Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's recent Pennsylvania Litter Research Study, funded by the PA Departments of Environmental Protection and Transportation, over 500 million pieces of litter can be found on our roads -- cigarette butts, plastic bags, food packaging film and an estimated 40 million beverage containers and fast food products.

"Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has been leading cleanups for 30 years," said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. "While cleanups are important, cleanups alone are not going to solve Pennsylvania's litter and illegal dumping problem. We need to change behaviors."

Separately, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful surveyed nine cities across the state and found they are spending \$68 million each year on managing litter and illegal dumping. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation spent another \$65 million removing litter from highway rights-of-way from 2014 through 2018.

"While litter and illegal dumping are often discussed as social or environmental problems, rarely do we think about their economic impact," explains Reiter. "Understanding these costs is a critical first step in developing strategies to change littering behavior. We're seeing that even extensive and expensive cleanup efforts can't keep pace with the amount of litter that's accumulating. The only way to reduce this cost burden is to reduce littering through preventive measures, such as expanding solid waste and recycling infrastructure and developing effective school-based and consumer education."

The mission of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is empowering Pennsylvanians to keep our communities clean and beautiful. The organization has committed county or municipal based affiliates serving 39 counties across the state that work closely with program partners, local governments, like-minded organizations and volunteers to coordinate events in their service areas.

The diverse project initiatives include illegal dump and river cleanups, litter pickups, recycling and special collections, tree and flower plantings, murals and painting of community structures, rain garden, outdoor classroom construction and educational events just to name a few.

For more information about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful or Pick UP Pennsylvania, visit keeppabeautiful.org. For more information about the 2019 Pennsylvania Litter Research Study, related cost research and media resources or the state's developing litter action plan, visit www.dep.pa.gov/litteringactionplan.

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About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to keep our communities clean and beautiful. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its volunteers have removed over 147 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania's roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.