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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Reaches Milestone - Collects 1 Million Tires through Cleanups and Special Collections



(February 17, 2021) Since its inception in 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its affiliates and partners have properly disposed of over one-million scrap tires. The tires were collected from Pennsylvania's roads, waterways, parks, trails and remote areas during locally coordinated cleanups or collected at one-day recycling events and permanent drop-off locations.

"Reaching this significant milestone took three decades and countless volunteer hours. Our volunteers collected tires during special collection events, stream cleanups, Illegal dump cleanups and Pick Up Pennsylvania events. A lot of hard, dirty work went in to moving that many tires. We couldn't be more proud and grateful," said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Tires collected were either recycled and processed into rubber mulch, play turf, rubber asphalt roads and other items or shredded and landfilled.

Although it's illegal to dump them, the PA Department of Environmental Protection has documented a dozen abandoned and commercial waste tire piles across the state, with more than 10,000 waste tires. Many smaller tire piles and residential dumpsites containing tires also dot the landscape, a result of historic, generational stockpiling and dumping by unscrupulous individuals and business owners.

The reasons people choose to dump tires illegally vary. Some people are unwilling or unable to pay for disposal, while others think risking a nominal fine is worth it. Some landowners will accept a fee for allowing businesses to unload tires on their property. The cost of cleaning up

these historic tire piles is prohibitive for most landowners and presents a problem once the land is put on the market.

Tires that are improperly disposed leach toxic chemicals that contaminate soil and water causing serious harm to individuals, wildlife and the environment. They also provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes, increasing the risk of West Nile Virus and Zika Virus. Tire piles are also in danger of catching fire. Tire fires are known for being difficult to extinguish and create an abundance of smoke that carries toxic chemicals from the breakdown of synthetic rubber compounds, contributing to air pollution.

“It is much more cost effective to dispose of tires properly in the first place. Many of our affiliates offer either one-day special collections or host permanent drop-off locations in their service areas, providing a convenient, affordable outlet. Tire dealers also offer disposal services for a small fee when you get new,” said Reiter.

The Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Affiliate Network often works with local solid waste and recycling offices to identify local disposal needs and implement special collections. For more information, visit keeppabeautiful.org and choose Calendar of Events for 2021 collection events. Contact your local county affiliate for more information about proper disposal in your area by going to keeppabeautiful.org and choosing Get Involved/Find an Affiliate.

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About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s vision is a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has worked with hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the state to pick up nearly 148 million pounds of trash from Pennsylvania’s roadways, waterways, greenways, vacant lots, forestlands and other community spaces. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s core programming focuses on litter and illegal dump prevention, cleanup, community greening, and proper waste handling and sustainable practices. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful works with many partnering organizations on the state and grassroots level to accomplish our goal of a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the nation’s largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.