



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2022

COMMUNITY BINS MARK LATEST ACHIEVEMENT FOR RECYCLING PROGRAM

Uniontown, PA – The Fayette County Recycling Program’s community drop-off bins garnered a successful haul in 2021.

According to tonnage totals, more than 1.03 million pounds (515.15 tons) of regular recyclables were collected through the county’s 34 drop-off bins between January and December of last year. The large, green bins can be found in many communities throughout Fayette County and are designed to make recycling more convenient for all citizens, especially those in rural areas.

Fayette County Recycling Coordinator/Stormwater Manager Sheila Shea placed the first drop-off bin in September 2020 at Menallen Elementary School in Menallen Township, marking the start of the recycling program’s revitalization.

“We entered 2021 with that first set of bins and high hopes for the future,” Shea said. “The response from our residents was incredible. We’ve also met so many of our neighbors from Greene and Somerset counties who said they make the trip to Fayette just to use our bins.”

The first 20 recycling drop-off bins were purchased in 2020 through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). An additional 14 bins were purchased in March 2021 through a second DEP grant, and delivered to municipalities who eagerly requested the program expand into their communities. As of January 2022, Shea has a long waiting list of bin requests from local organizations, school districts, businesses and more.

“We hope another round of funding will let us expand our offerings to everyone who wants to be part of this project,” Shea said. “We’re so grateful for the response we’ve gotten in such a short time, and I’m thrilled to see my goals of making recycling more convenient for all our citizens come to fruition.”

Currently, all 42 Fayette County municipalities either have local access to one of the recycling drop-off bins; offer their own recycling collection services; or both. County bin contents are hauled by local contractor, Carry All Products Inc., for processing at their state-of-the-art facility, Superior Fine Grind LLC, in South Connellsville.

The recycling bins’ successful year comes on the heels of another milestone for the program. In October, the Fayette County Recycling Convenience Center celebrated its unprecedented collection of more than 500 tons of recyclables in its first six months of operations.

“Since we started revamping this program in 2020, Fayette County has shown their support by helping us keep millions of pounds of materials out of our landfills,” Shea said. “We have to keep reducing our carbon footprint and doing our part to save the earth, so it’s really exciting to have our communities rallying behind us.”

Located at 105 Romeo Lane in Uniontown, the Fayette County Recycling Convenience Center is a self-serve, drive-through option for residents to recycle both regular and hard-to-recycle materials year-round.

Fayette County purchased the property using a DEP Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act grant. Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania opted to leave the industry and close its long-standing recycling center in May 2020, after serving the county for about 30 years.

Fayette County Commissioner Vince Vicites, who founded the county's recycling program more than 30 years ago, said the tonnage totals are "great news" for the future.

"I hope the tonnages continue to grow every year, with both our drop-off program and the recycling center. Also, I hope some municipalities will consider adopting curbside recycling programs in the future," Vicites said. "The county will certainly support any municipality that would want to start this type of program. Curbside programs will help maximize the amount of recycling collected annually. I want to thank all our residents for their participation and support of this project."

Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr said he's "not surprised" by the recycling program's success, as Shea has "worked hard to bring best practices in recycling to Fayette County" including "making recycling convenient."

"As a culture, we are so overbooked. People are so busy, there's just no room for anything that isn't convenient; so if we expect people to recycle, we need to make it as convenient as other disposal methods - and that's where the drop-off bins come in," Lohr said. "That people are using the bins and we're actually having trouble keeping up with emptying bins is a testimony to just how effective this program is and how far we've come."

Lohr said he believes 2022 will bring "further innovations and successes" for the program.

"Sheila is constantly looking for cost-effective, innovative solutions to recycling that will work for Fayette County," he said. "From our recycling center, to conveniently located recycling bins, we're ahead of the curve and setting the pace for other counties. That's Fayette County at its finest."

Commissioner Scott Dunn said Fayette County continues to set a leading example for recycling programs statewide.

"After garnering such widespread acclaim over the past year, it's no surprise that other counties are now looking to us for inspiration in implementing their own programs," Dunn said. "Our efforts are so successful because it's now easier than ever for our residents to get involved and excited about recycling. With Sheila at the helm, this is just the beginning of what we can achieve."

Dunn, who regularly participates in community cleanups, said the drop-off program has significantly impacted the amount of illegal waste dumping in rural communities.

"When you offer people a convenient, cost-effective alternative, they have no choice but to participate," he said. "By strategically placing our bins at all ends of the county, we can reach those residents whose locations may have kept them from recycling previously. If we continue bringing recycling right to their backyards, our collection totals will only go up from here."

Shea is currently seeking a new round of grant funding from the state Department of Environmental Protection, which will allow her to add to the program's existing fleet of drop-off bins. She's also

working with multiple Fayette County school districts to expand her outreach efforts to students through new programming; has plans to host on-site stormwater and recycling workshops; and will install multiple rain gardens around the center.

Recyclables that can be placed in the county drop-off bins include:

- Plastic bottles and jugs (numbers one through seven).
- Aluminum/steel/bi-metal cans.
- Cardboard.
- Newspaper.
- Mixed paper/office paper.
- Glass bottles and jugs (all colors).

“Absolutely no plastic bags are to be placed in our green recycling bins, because they get stuck in our processor’s machinery and can cause extensive and costly damage,” Shea said. “We’re working on a list of alternative, local recycling resources for items we’re unable to accept currently. We hope to be able to take things like plastic bags, hazardous household wastes and other materials on a regular basis in the future.”

For more information about the Fayette County Recycling Program, contact Shea at sshea@fayettepa.org; or call the Fayette County Recycling Hotline at 724-430-4884 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For regular updates, follow the Fayette County Recycling Convenience Center on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FayetteCoRecycling.

For more information about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

###

This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

For more information, contact Kristi Rooker Kassimer, Public Relations Specialist, at 412-691-0262, kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info or Kaylie Moore, Community Relations Coordinator, at 724-430-1200 Ext. 1611, kmoore@fayettepa.org.