



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY LAUNCHES NEW RECYCLING PROGRAM

UNIONTOWN, PA - After months of planning, Fayette County has officially launched its new, state-of-the-art recycling program.

Fayette County Recycling Coordinator Sheila Shea has implemented the first phase of the program's expansion through a grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection. The grant allowed for the purchase of new haul-all recycling bins, which will be placed throughout the county, significantly increasing citizens' abilities to participate. Shea is also working with local schools and other organizations to grow their recycling efforts.

On Tuesday, Shea unveiled the first of many haul-all bins to be placed in our communities this month, when it was delivered to Menallen Elementary School in Menallen Township. The location was extremely fitting, Shea said, as the school regularly competes - and ranks highly - in the nationwide PepsiCo Recycling Challenge. "We're extremely proud of what the students here at Menallen have been able to achieve over the years simply by recycling in their classrooms and their homes," Shea said. "They've won money for their efforts several times, which was then put directly back into good use in the school. This also teaches the students the impact recycling has on the environment, and they've been able to take those lessons home with them and continue their efforts with their families."

While the recycling program has been receiving regular updates for several years, Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania's decision to close its local Recycling Center this past May created ample opportunity for what Shea called "bigger and better things." "I'm so excited for the countywide drop-off program to kick off. We are going to make recycling more convenient for residents across Fayette County," Shea said. "We have 20 bins to place, currently, and will place others as they become available."

In addition to the new recycling bins, the county is currently finalizing a memorandum of understanding with Carry All Products Inc. of Connellsville, for hauling services; and Superior Fine Grind LLC of South Connellsville will provide processing services for the county. "The new partnership with Carry All Products and Superior Fine Grind is such an exciting one," Shea said. "It's wonderful to have a state-of-the-art recycling center here in Fayette County."

Last week, Superior Fine Grind Plant Manager Mark Romesburg took county officials on a tour of the facility, which processes a few thousand tons of recyclables each month. He said the location "regularly exceeds the industry standard of one ton per hour." The plant's machines use a complex conveyor belt system, magnets and sheer manpower to sort all the recyclables. Shea said the county's recycling

tonnages will increase significantly, as Goodwill only processed plastics numbered one and two, while Superior can handle one through seven.

“We like to encourage all municipalities to scrap their own metal and keep the funds to help with their own projects, rather than sending them to us,” Romesburg said. “Our glass processing is one of a kind. Our three main glass machines were the first in the country to process their specific glass size. Before this, all our glass went to landfills.” One material Romesburg hopes to decrease receipt of is plastic bags, as they clog and damage the recycling machines and eventually all end up in the landfill. No plastic bags will be accepted in the new haul-all bins, and all county citizens should use paper or reusable bags whenever possible.

“Fayette County will be helping divert recycling materials from our landfills. Waste has a negative impact on the environment, so by recycling, we reduce our carbon footprint,” Shea said. “According to the Environmental Protection Agency, recycling one ton of office paper can save energy equivalent to consuming 322 gallons of gasoline. We have to do our part.”

Recyclables that can be placed in the new haul-all bins include:

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

Shea and Romesburg, along with Fayette County Commissioners Scott Dunn and Vince Vicites; DEP Representative William Jester; and Carry All Products Inc. Operations Manager Chris Koontz were on hand for Wednesday’s haul-all bin unveiling.

Commissioner Vicites said he’s excited to see the recycling program, which he founded in the early 1990s, be completely “revamped”. He added, “When this program was created, Fayette County was one of the top counties in the state for its recycling efforts. I’ve always wanted to see it improve and get back to where it once was, and we’re definitely on the right track,” Vicites said. “We have a great plan to implement and an excellent recycling plant located here in Fayette County that we’re working with, so I have high hopes for the future of recycling in Fayette County.”

The ultimate goal of the recycling program is to protect Fayette County’s environment,” Vicites added. “Recycling is the right thing to do. We need to continue our practices, as we have for many years, in recycling materials that can be kept out of landfills,” he said. “We have to be cognizant of the environment and improve it for future generations. I think we’re on track to grow this program to the highest level we can reach.”

Commissioner Dunn said he’s excited to finally be rolling out the new drop-off containers and looks forward to “ramping up” that part of the county’s efforts with more containers in the future. “Reducing the amount of trash going to our landfills will benefit everybody, so that, coupled with the new recycling center means we’re aiming to have the best recycling program in the state of Pennsylvania,” he said.

Dunn said the county is also working with DEP officials to establish a future recycling center in Uniontown.

“The one in Connellsville is a private enterprise, not a nonprofit. It’s a recycling center on steroids. It’s top notch, and we will have no problem being serviced by them,” Dunn said. “Once the Uniontown center is up and running, citizens will have a place to drop off their hard-to-recycle items year-round, rather than a few times a year at events. We’re aiming to have this whole process pay for itself so we will actually have a reduction in cost to our taxpayers.”

Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr quoted an old, Native American proverb that states, “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

“This is so true in terms of our beautiful county,” Lohr said. “To have a recycling program of this caliber in place will reduce our landfills and help to make this beautiful place even more attractive to new residents and new businesses.”

Fayette County’s first phase of haul-all bins should be in place by mid-September. Their locations include:

- Penn State Fayette (by the red farmhouse).
- Luzerne Township Municipal Building.
- Springhill Township Municipal Shed.
- Ohiopyle Ranger/Maintenance Shed (171 Dinnerbell Road).
- Kentuck Knob Campground.
- Menallen Elementary School.
- Jefferson Township Municipal Building.
- Fairchance Borough Municipal Garage.
- Franklin Elementary School.
- Smithfield Elementary School.
- Ohiopyle Borough (Parkview Street).
- Fayette City (by the municipal building).
- Uniontown High School (Wilson Avenue parking lot).
- Lower Tyrone Township.
- Connellsville Township.

About the types of recycling collected, Shea added, “In addition to plastic bags, no windows, doors, furniture, chemicals, electronics or other hard-to-recycle items will be accepted in the new haul-all bins. Doing so would be detrimental to the program, as municipalities would then be responsible for disposing of those items. Those items will be accepted at the next Fayette County Hard-to-Recycle event, which takes place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 19 at 114 Elliotsville Road in Farmington.”

For more information, call the Fayette County Recycling Hotline at 724-430-4884.

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