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## **FAYETTE COUNTY RECYCLING PROGRAM FEATURED IN STUDY**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County’s newly revamped, state-of-the-art recycling program has caught the attention of a prestigious study.

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania recently worked with Fayette County Recycling Coordinator/Stormwater Manager Sheila Shea to compile data for its rural recycling study, funded by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

Dr. Jennifer J. Haney of Bloomsburg’s Department of Environmental, Geographical and Geological Sciences said the study is the first of its kind ever conducted in Pennsylvania, putting Fayette County at the forefront of the state’s recycling industry.

Haney, along with Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP) Program Manager Doug Orner, surveyed selected counties and municipalities last summer.

“The goal is to guide policies related to waste management and recycling in the state of Pennsylvania,” Haney said. “More specifically, the results will direct policymakers to the growing challenges faced by rural counties and municipalities; and propose solutions for improving access to and funding of recycling programs in the state.”

Shea was asked to provide information about Fayette County’s total population served by recycling collection; all past and present recycling facilities; challenges and opportunities she’s encountered as recycling coordinator; how she plans to address anticipated challenges and opportunities in the future; key areas for improving policies governing waste and recycling statewide; and examples of outreach materials distributed to county residents.

“My hope is that, by sharing the trials and tribulations we’ve gone through with our program, as well as how we are steadily moving forward, maybe we can help other Pennsylvania counties that may be searching for ways to start or expand their existing recycling programs,” Shea said. “We’ve worked hard over the last few years to redesign our recycling program and turn it into something that is truly state-of-the-art, with the capacity to achieve great sustainability and success for our county and environment. It’s exciting to be able to share that progress with other counties in the hopes of inspiring their recycling endeavors.”

Fayette County Commissioner Vince Vicites, who founded the county’s recycling program in the early 1990s, said Fayette has always been a recycling leader, with one of the best rural programs statewide.

“We were named fourth best in the state in 1994, and we’ve made steady uphill progress ever since. With the revamping of our program in recent years, it doesn’t surprise me that we’ve been selected for the Bloomsburg Study,” Vicites said. “Once it’s complete, Fayette County Recycling will serve as a

prototype for Pennsylvania, with one of the best materials processing centers in Connellsville, in CAP (Carry All Products) Recycling.”

Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr also said he’s “not surprised” that Fayette County’s recycling program is receiving accolades.

“Fayette County is gaining a reputation as being on the cutting edge on every front, and recycling is just another example of where we are leading the way,” Lohr said. “From expanding our drop-off program and opening a convenience center, to implementing best-management practices like bioswales, rain gardens and riparian buffers - we’re doing it all! Kudos to Sheila Shea. She’s taking our program to a whole new level.”

Commissioner Scott Dunn said it’s an honor to be recognized by Bloomsburg University, as Fayette County has “put a lot of time and thought” into designing its recycling program.

“We took many trips to other counties to see how they run their recycling programs, and we’ve had many discussions with the DEP along the way,” Dunn said. “We ended up using a hybrid approach, which includes our drop-off bins at various locations, as well as a centralized convenience center which will more readily accommodate hard-to-recycle items.”

Haney will use Fayette County’s data to prepare and submit two manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals - one in geography and one in waste management. She will also present the study’s results at the Annual PROP Meeting in July; as well as at future meetings of the American Association of Geographers (AAG).

“We employed the use of in-depth studies detailing the development and implementation of successful waste management and recycling programs in rural counties in Pennsylvania,” Haney said. “Counties were selected by DEP region to highlight the geographic considerations and diversity in recycling collection programs and services offered to residents throughout the state, challenges and successes.”

In addition to Fayette County and some of our 42 municipalities, Wayne, Perry and Center counties were featured in the study, as well as two mandated municipalities - Bloomsburg and Scott Township - in Columbia County.

The results of the rural recycling study will be available in the coming weeks. For more information, visit [www.bloomu.edu](http://www.bloomu.edu) or contact Haney at [jhaney@bloomu.edu](mailto:jhaney@bloomu.edu).

For more information about the Fayette County Recycling Program, visit [www.fayettecountypa.org](http://www.fayettecountypa.org).

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