



Amelia County High School Future Farmers of America

THE PICKUP EXPRESS



News and Ideas for Adopt-a-Highway Volunteers

Fall Cleanup set for Sept. 17

Your summer tan hasn't even yet begun to fade, but it's time to start planning for fall. Mark your calendars for Virginia's Statewide Fall Cleanup on Sept. 17. Make plans for your group to pitch in on that date now.

Traditionally, the third Saturday in September is selected for Virginia's Fall Cleanup to coincide with other states that observe their annual statewide cleanups on that day. If your group can't clean up on that day, please select a convenient day as close to Sept. 17 as possible.

The Fall Cleanup is a special, one-day opportunity to clean up litter across the Commonwealth. This is Virginia's 17th annual statewide fall litter pickup. The first was held in 1988.

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Virginia's
Statewide Fall
Cleanup



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Good intention creates litter problem

Q. In the Fall 2004 edition, there was a story that said a local Nelson County man drank beer under trees and left his trash. The AAH group left him bags which he has been filling. I wonder if this story could have inspired other groups to leave bags for residents to use?

A. While it might be O.K. for groups that pick up their roadsides regularly to leave bags for others to fill, it's problematic for non-VDOT-maintained areas. According to Tina Fox in Springfield, "Someone keeps leaving an empty orange trash bag mounted on a stick in the parking lot [for Lake Mercer]. Apparently the bags are left by [someone in] the Adopt-a-Highway program. The orange bag seems to attract people to put trash in it, then it overflows, and people start leaving more trash."

"The police said they can't do anything until a 'No Dumping' sign is posted, and advised getting one. People don't tend to leave trash unless there's ALREADY a trash bag there. Can you please make sure no one leaves any of those orange bags (full or empty) anywhere near this parking area?"

Commissioner's Column



I come from the fiscal side of the house, so when I hear that the Adopt-a-Highway program saves VDOT \$3 million per year in litter removal costs, that figure makes me sit up and take notice.

Volunteers like you clean about a fourth of our roadsides, and we owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude. However, it's clear that more needs to be done to attack the Commonwealth's growing litter problem. That's why several state agencies teamed together for a coordinated statewide litter control campaign (see story on page 3) this past spring. The results are encouraging, and we need to build on these efforts.

I am also encouraged by the potential offered by the new Roadside Management Program. This program will allow communities to improve and manage state-maintained roadsides, alleviating some of VDOT's maintenance responsibilities (see story on page 3).

With a shrinking budget and growing population, we need to be resourceful and innovative in our approach to attacking litter on our roadsides. Thank you for your efforts in helping us to do just that.

Greg

Gregory A. Whirley

Why I volunteer

Ray Basley is an Adopt-a-Highway group unto himself. He has adopted two separate roads in James City County and belongs to an organization that adopted another one. And while he doesn't quite pick up every day, he comes pretty darn close to it. He picks up trash along the half-mile Brick Yard Road (Route 610) 15 to 20 times per month. Then, he cleans up the roadways on the first two miles of Forge Road. He also belongs to the James York Exchange Club, which adopted Strawberry Plains Road. He spends about five to 10 hours a month keeping his community beautiful. He's been providing a monthly report on his finds and progress to VDOT's Williamsburg Residency for eight years.

Quote: "I don't like to see trash," Basley said. "Once I start cleaning up, I want to keep going."

How I help the environment: "I get a stick that's about two feet long and put a beer bottle on top of it. It makes the trash more visible and lets the litterbugs know that I see what they are doing.



It seems to be working. Last month, there were only six beer bottles along the whole six miles of [Forge] road."

How I spend my spare time: "I'm involved with my church – St. Stephen's – and with VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars)."

Assign-a-Highway program works

Southwest Virginia's Assign-a-Highway program has been so --successful at keeping the roadways clean that the state Litter Control and Recycling Fund Advisory Board has approved a grant to hire someone to promote the program statewide.

The individual hired through the one-year grant will produce a "how to" package for localities to follow in instituting an Assign-a-Highway program in their area. A Web site will also be developed.

The Assign-a-Highway program started in Buchanan County and has grown to a four-county region in southwest Virginia. Under this program, the court system can order a probationer to pick up litter every two weeks on a two-mile stretch of road. For the program to be implemented, all the judges in a region must be committed to it, and the county must hire a litter control coordinator with law enforcement powers to administer it.

Litter control groups go extra miles

Nearly a dozen media stories this spring and summer focused on Virginia's litter problem and the interagency statewide campaign against it.

The Virginia Interagency Litter Control Task Force coordinated a three-month Litter Control Campaign from April through June. The task force consisted of representatives from the Virginia offices of transportation, environmental quality, game and inland fisheries, conservation and recreation, forestry, health, state police, education and tourism.

During the campaign period, Adopt-a-Highway groups were encouraged to recruit new members to their organization, go "an extra mile" in their cleanups, or encourage new groups to adopt stretches of the roadway. There were 10,614 Adopt-a-Highway permits as of the end of the second quarter of 2004, and there was a slight increase – 10,823 permits for the same period in 2005.

Also during the campaign period:

- The Adopt-A-Stream program held 44 events and collected 358 bags of litter.
- Twenty-six schools across Virginia registered cleanups. The Department of Education mailed 2,196 certificates to students and teachers who participated.
- State police increased enforcement efforts. During the 2005 Memorial Day weekend alone, state police cited 40 people for littering and/or for improperly secured loads. Both offenses are a Class 1 misdemeanor, which carries a penalty of up to one year in jail and/or a maximum fine of \$2,500.
- Stewardship Virginia registered 236 projects (an 80 percent increase over last spring) and distributed 14,323 certificates to participants this year.

As part of the campaign, a litter Web site was developed to pull all statewide efforts together online. This site offers links to individual state agency sites and activities:

<http://www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/litter/index.html>

Who litters?

People who litter tend to be those who:

- Are younger, with lower income and education
- Are not strongly connected to their community
- Don't participate in outdoor recreation often
- Don't recycle much
- Don't value water as much
- Smoke
- Have longer than average commutes to work sites (eat in vehicles)
- Live in rural areas

Also, young people tend to litter more when with other young people; other age groups litter less when with others.

Source: "Litter – Who, What, Why" presentation by Katie Register, Clean Virginia Waterways

Roadside Management program draws interest

The Commonwealth Transportation Board on Sept. 15 will consider regulations developed by VDOT for its new Roadside Management Program. Locally led improvements to the city of Lynchburg's roadsides were so successful that Sen. Charles Hawkins introduced Senate Bill 260 to allow other such improvements statewide under regulations developed by VDOT.

The agency held a public hearing in May, and the proposed regulation was made available for public comment May 16-July 15. The regulation allows communities to participate in the improvement and management of state-maintained roadsides. It also enables sponsorship signs to acknowledge such efforts.

More than 4.7 miles of right of way have been improved along the Rt. 29 bypass in Lynchburg. Contributions toward improvements in Lynchburg so far amount to more than \$1.45 million. The city's annual operation and maintenance costs for managing these improved areas is approximately \$325,000.

Businesses, local governments or communities that elect to take over improvements on their roadsides agree to do so in perpetuity. They are then responsible not only for landscaping and other improvements, but also for keeping the area clean and free of trash and debris.

If your community is interested in such locally lead roadside improvements, please have your government representative contact your VDOT Residency Administrator.

You can also check VDOT's Web site at VirginiaDOT.org and go to "Programs."

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Cleanup Crew Working Stories from the Roadside

Goose that laid the golden egg

Ray Patrick found some unusual items on his pickup route in Wythe County – two goose nests with 10 eggs in each. He also found a \$20 bill and a \$10 bill. And that's no goose egg.

Thumpetty-thump-thump

Look at Frosty go . . . over the hills of snow! Obviously Frosty the Snowman traveled through Hanover County in January because he left something behind. His corn cob pipe was found by the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Glen Allen when they did their pickup on Jan. 16. Maybe he'll be back to look for it on Christmas Day.

Sounds like a TV dinner

The Colonial Golf Club of James City County found a TV and two microwave ovens during their February clean up. The only thing missing was the easy chair.

Potluck supper

Let's hope the litterbugs didn't go hungry while they waited for Jody and Gillie Jenkins to do their trash pickup in Goochland County on April 24. The Jenkins found unopened groceries including canned salmon, salad crackers, drinks and tangerines.

Rolling on in Isle of Wight County

They almost found enough tires for a semi-truck. The Roll on Rogers Deer Club of Isle of Wight County found 10 tires and two riding lawn mowers along their two adopted stretches of road Feb. 26. They also collected 71 bags of trash and an air conditioning unit. Roll on volunteers – and keep cool.

This survey's for you, Bud

Since alcoholic beverage containers dominate the roadway's litter, the West Stafford Ruritan Club decided to find out which beer litterbugs enjoy most. When they did their pickup on March 2, they discovered that Budweiser was the No. 1 choice, with Budweiser Lite being No. 2.

Sobering find

The Jerry Gulliam's Family found three unopened beers along their route in Franklin County on March 20.



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