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**CONTACT: Mike Dobbs, Troup County Manager**  
**PHONE: (706) 883-1610, or**  
**CONTACT: Doris Jefferson, Keep Troup Beautiful**  
**PHONE: (706) 884-9922**

### **Troup County Trash Bash Challenge: Troup County challenges cities to bash trash at Great American Cleanup**

**(March 26, 2009)** Troup County Commissioners are strapping on their fighting gloves to battle trash at this year's Great American Cleanup. And they're betting local cities can't pick up more of the yucky stuff than them.

Set for Saturday, April 18, the Great American Cleanup, staged each year by Keep Troup Beautiful, will host the first annual Troup County Trash Bash Challenge with the Board of Commissioners challenging the mayors and councils of LaGrange, West Point and Hogansville to meet them outside for a bash. A trash bash, that is.

"Litter is a problem throughout Troup County, but it's a problem we can control if we work together," said County Commission Chairman Ricky Wolfe. "Keep Troup Beautiful does a wonderful job with the Great American Cleanup each year, and we want to do our part by helping them promote the event and raise awareness. With all the blessings we enjoy in Troup County, it's a shame our roadsides are littered. We're better than this."

Troup's commissioners are no strangers to the Great American Cleanup, a day set aside each spring for citizens to collect litter. Commissioners Buck Davis and Ken Smith have participated in the event, leading teams within their communities to bag trash.

"When visitors come into our area, the first thing they see is our roadsides," said Davis. "People throw trash on the road, and that should never be—that trash stops up our drains, clutters the roadside, and blows everywhere. We've got plastic bags in treetops."

“The problem with litter is very noticeable and a reflection on the whole community,” said Smith.

Elected officials from LaGrange, West Point and Hogansville also have participated in past Cleanups. Mayors from each city have agreed to accept Troup County’s challenge to bash trash even more this year.

Keep Troup Beautiful Director Doris Jefferson applauds the Board of Commissioners’ efforts to help raise community awareness.



Members of the Troup County Board of Commissioners joined Keep Troup Beautiful (KTB) volunteers on Monday, March 23, to assess the volume of trash along local roads. This area on Roanoke Road is representative of the county’s heaviest littered roadsides, where paper and plastic bags, bottles and trash in trees is an eyesore. Standing at right, KTB volunteer Carol Smith points to a plastic bag caught in a tree branch. She is joined by, from left, Commissioner Buck Davis, Commission Chairman Ricky Wolfe, KTB volunteer Michael Markle, Commissioner Ken Smith, and KTB Chair Bob Wiggins

“I am thrilled to have the local officials more involved,” said Jefferson. “This will give our event a lot of clout and show our citizens that their elected officials care about what’s going on. We know these leaders appreciate the benefits of having a clean community because they’re trying to bring in industry and promote citizenship.”

The Great American Cleanup is the single biggest event targeting litter in Troup County and the biggest event sponsored by Keep Troup Beautiful. Last year, approximately 800 volunteers collected more than 10 tons of trash during the Cleanup.

“Litter is definitely a problem in Troup County,” said Jefferson. “Residents may not even notice trash along the roads, but when they spend a few hours picking up what people have thrown or dumped out, they gain more appreciation for keeping it clean.”

In preparation for the Great American Cleanup, Keep Troup Beautiful conducted its annual litter index on March 23 and 24, covering approximately 250 miles in Troup County. Keep American Beautiful requires its local affiliates to conduct the index.

“We follow a route that was established several years ago to determine each year whether the amount of litter is increasing or decreasing,” said Jefferson. “This gives us a good idea on what areas need special attention during the Great American Cleanup.

“The trend,” she said, “is that where litter is increasing, it continues to increase each year. Our hope is that the Commissioners’ challenge will raise awareness that motivates people to make extra efforts to clean up their own communities so this can get better. It certainly doesn’t need to get worse. Why? Because this is where we live.”

Jefferson said she looks forward to working with the four governments to build on the Great American Cleanup and the Trash Bash Challenge. “People will appreciate seeing their elected officials out there working side by side with them,” she said.

“By working together, Troup County and its cities can create community awareness that we have a trash problem and need to address it,” Davis concluded.

