

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Mike Dobbs, Troup County Manager
PHONE: (706) 883-1610**

Troup County Commissioners to host Litter Summit

(February 23, 2011) In their continued efforts to eliminate local litter, the Troup County Board of Commissioners will host a litter summit on March 31 to gather input on ways to tackle roadside trash.

The Troup County Litter Summit is set for 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at the Troup County Government Center on Ridley Avenue. All interested individuals, businesses and organizations with ideas for solving the local litter problem are encouraged to attend.

“We hope to get ideas from citizens on what we can do to reduce the amount of litter on our roadsides and in our parks,” said Assistant County Manager Tod Tentler, pointing to Pyne Road Park as an example of a site where litter is excessive. “It’s a well-used facility in spring, summer and fall, but we spend numerous man-hours picking up litter when people could just as easily throw that same litter in a garbage can. Those man-hours could be used in better ways.”

County Commission Chairman Ricky Wolfe said he’s hard-pressed to name the messiest spot along local roadways.

“It’s pervasive everywhere throughout Troup County,” said Wolfe. “It’s hard to find any continuous stretch of our roadways that is not littered. We [commissioners] have spent so much time on this that I’m sensitive to the subject and now everywhere I go my eyes are subconsciously looking for litter, and the more I go the more I see.”

Recognizing the problem as they looked out their car windows while traveling Troup County—and backed by findings of a Georgia Tech Study that pinpointed litter as a detriment to the local landscape and the community’s perception of itself—the commissioners two years ago deemed litter a priority issue and since then have worked to keep it on the front burner of the community conscience. To foster public awareness, the county commission in 2009 challenged the cities of LaGrange, Hogansville and West

Point to collect litter at the Great American Cleanup. Then and in 2010, all five county commissioners rolled up their sleeves and picked up trash, with Keep Troup Beautiful proclaiming them champs of the Troup Trash Bash Challenge both years.

The commissioners recently voted to support programs offered through Troup Alive & Green (TAG), a nonprofit agency formed in 2010 to maintain and enhance the natural and manmade beauty of Troup County. An alliance of Keep Troup Beautiful, the Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee and Troup TREEmendous, TAG considers tackling litter one of its major objectives.

“I have become much more aware of trash and litter in our community due to my involvement with TAG,” said Troup Alive & Green Chairman Patrick Crews. “I applaud the efforts of our county commission in tackling this community problem head-on. We as citizens should decide that we will not stand for having this issue in our community.”

Troup County Commissioners have explored numerous ways to tackle trash but the problem persists.

“We’ve worked to be supportive of every agency in Troup County that deals with this subject, have participated in every event we’ve been asked to that supports anti-litter, and we try to do our part as far as collection of trash,” said Wolfe. “We’ve talked about it in depth in various public meetings, but there’s obviously much more to be done.”

The commissioners welcome any individual or group with an interest in the subject to attend the summit and share suggestions on how to prevent litter.

“I have no idea what the solution is, but I know that simply increasing the pickup of litter is not the solution,” said Wolfe. “The problem is how the litter got there in the first place.”

Commissioners hope that citizens who have lived and worked in other places will share what works in communities that keep roadsides and parks clean.

“I’ve just got to believe that among the residents of Troup County there are good ideas that can help us get at a solution,” said Wolfe. “Some ideas could be simple but profound, while others could be more complicated, but I feel our people can do it.”

Litter Summit participants do not need to register or be on an agenda to address commissioners. All ideas are considered valuable, according to Wolfe.

For more information, contact County Manager Mike Dobbs at (706) 883-1610.