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**You gotta be kidding!  
Troup County joins statewide recycling campaign**

**(Sept. 8, 2009)** Troup County has joined a statewide recycling education campaign designed to promote awareness of the need for recycling by pointing out the absurdity of not recycling.

The County recently added to its Web site, [troupcountyga.org](http://troupcountyga.org), a page called “Troup Recycles” with a link to the state campaign’s Web site, [yougottabekidding.org](http://yougottabekidding.org). The “You Gotta Be Kidding!” campaign pokes fun at Georgia non-recyclers like Tommy Krenshaw, a fictitious character who arrogantly announces that he will find a new planet when this one fills up with the materials he refuses to recycle.

“Tommy is just one of the unwitting characters in this new recycling awareness campaign created by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA),” said Troup County Manager Mike Dobbs. “Troup County pledged last spring to support Keep Troup Beautiful any way we can to rid our communities of litter, and promoting recycling is one way we can do this.”

The DCA campaign shines a spotlight on common misperceptions about recycling. Joining Tommy are several other characters with equally misguided reasons for not recycling, such as Maria Inez-Phillips who can’t be bothered to pull recyclable items from her trash because she gets too many gossip magazines to wade through them all. Both Tommy and Maria proudly proclaim their non-recycler status with T-shirt slogans that read: “I don’t recycle!”

“The campaign highlights the absurdities of not recycling and responds—on behalf of the rest of us—with ‘You gotta be kidding!’” said Dobbs.

Randy Hartmann, director of DCA's Office of Environmental Management, said the need for the campaign came from a Solid Waste Characterization Study which revealed that approximately 40 percent of what Georgians throw away is actually recyclable. These findings were amplified by a recent DCA survey which showed that a whopping 45 percent of Georgians do not routinely recycle.

"Every time someone bypasses a recycling bin or chooses to throw a can away, they're effectively saying, 'I don't recycle,' said Hartmann. "They're wearing their apathy on their sleeve. What we're saying is that these excuses won't work anymore."

The unique campaign is designed to raise awareness about the convenience and benefits of recycling by creating a buzz that will drive people to the campaign Web site where DCA presents numerous reasons to recycle.

"The absurd nature of what these characters say contrasts sharply with the many rational reasons to recycle," said Hartmann. "Because, unlike what Tommy may say, we can't just find somewhere else to live when we have used up our natural resources. People interacting with the campaign will come away thinking that, in light of these preposterous alternatives, recycling is a pretty simple proposition."

The Department of Community Affairs recently awarded Troup County a \$1,000 grant to cover costs of signage and promotion materials to kickoff the recycling education campaign. These items will be used and/or distributed at several sports events hosted by Troup County Parks and Recreation this fall, starting with a Sept. 12 Soccer Jamboree where residents will be introduced to "Tommy," according to Dexter Wells, warden of Troup County Correctional Institute and local "You Gotta Be Kidding" coordinator.

Troup County is one of many governments and communities across the state taking part in the campaign by bringing the characters to life in posters and on T-shirts. By partnering with DCA, Troup County hopes to inform citizens about the [yougottabekidding.org](http://yougottabekidding.org) Web site where facts about recycling are intended to motivate action. The campaign targets all non-recyclers with special focus on those ages 25 to 34 because, according to DCA, research shows this group is the least likely to recycle.

"Troup County commissioners and citizens showed their desire for a clean county when they turned out in record numbers last spring to pick up trash," said Wells. "This recycling campaign is another way we can promote beautiful communities."

The Troup County Board of Commissioners challenged local mayors last April to collect trash at the first Troup County Trash Bash during Keep Troup Beautiful's Great American Cleanup. Turnout at the annual spring event was the greatest ever, largely due to Troup County's support, according to Keep Troup Beautiful representatives.

For more on the recycling campaign, visit [troupcountyga.org](http://troupcountyga.org) and click on the Troup Recycles link.