

THIS WEEK IN "LITTERLAND"

www.litterpreventionprogram.com

April 20, 2014

It's Earth Week and cleanups are in high rotation



Above, Barnsley, UK doesn't deserve this. No place on Earth does. We can use Earth Week every year as a pivot for communicating that littering is wrong and attitudes must change. Remember, this is the only planet we have.

This week brings out the heroes of a never-ending story. They are volunteers who conquer the blight of one of the most senseless actions known to humans: littering - the villain of our piece. Cities and community groups have girded a veritable army of good citizens to attack the garbage strewn by the careless and carried by the wind. We send a heartfelt note of appreciation to those warriors on waste who know that removing litter lessens the likelihood of it reappearing. Current levels are alarming. A perfect gift for Earth Day on April 22 is to promise never to throw any garbage down. Why can't municipalities promote that idea?

Shocker in Australia!

Study reveals the extent and perils of litter

The global litter invasion has taken over the most remote beaches of Australia, says a two-year CSIRO study to be published later this year. Among the wrenching consequences of a rampant scourge of plastic litter noted is the level of death in sea birds and marine mammals. Scientists are calling it "plastic food" and are very worried about its harmful impacts. Dr. Denise Hardesty tells yahoo.com, "We open turtles that have died and see that they're jammed full of plastics. I've found over 200 pieces of plastic in a single bird." She blames the estimated 150 million pieces of litter not on outsiders, but on Australians: illegal dumping, irresponsible mariners and beachgoers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Responding to criticism from state officials, Laurens, SC has relocated its controversial anti-litter contest winning sign from state to city property. Mayor Sharon Brownlee said trash on the streets is more offensive than the bold slogan, "Don't litter, Jack * * *, that means you."

HEADLINE LITTER GRABBERS (APR 13 - 20)

Some of what made our News Reel this week
litterpreventionprogram.com/news-reel.html

After cleanup, Hamilton itemizes litter by brand [4/15]
Hamilton, Ontario will fuel a high-octane spring cleanup by revving up a legion of residents to bag voluminous litter. Restaurant chain Tim Hortons put up a cash prize to award to the high school that collects the most. Volunteers from the local non-profit, Fix Our World, will inventory all of it, hoping this could lead name brands to fund social marketing campaigns on litter prevention.

Tasmania bedeviled by high litter tallies [4/19]
Keep Australia Beautiful is keeping tabs on Tasmania. Its interim report says 27 per cent of litter collected there in November was on roadsides. Items found in order of prevalence: cigarette butts (67.4 per cent), plastic (15.4), paper and cardboard products (8.3), metal products (5.3), miscellaneous (1.8), glass (1.5) and illegal dumping (0.03).

More being nabbed, Singapore stats show [4/15]
Environmental enforcers in Singapore spent 50 per cent more time since May 2013 on littering and smoking offences. There are now 92 identified litter hot spots on the island where NEA enforcement is concentrated.

Strides taken to advance Louisiana butt litter bill [4/8]
Louisiana's anti-cigarette butt legislation sailed through the House. See House Bill 1075 at www.legis.la.gov.

Late-night bar levies rocking UK



So here's the deal: if you own a nightclub or eatery in downtown Southampton, you might pay a tax for your patrons' litter. The idea of the late-night levy is finding traction among UK politicians, but establishment owners feel doubly taxed. They say they try to clean up as best they can and want to see better municipal efforts and enforcement.

EU votes for drastic limits on plastic bags

The issue of plastic blew into the forefront at the EU last week. A proposal aimed at breaking Europeans' addiction to plastic carrier bags was backed by most of the 539 voting MEPs. Member nations must now commit to measures to cut bag use in half by 2017 and by 80 per cent by 2019,

Watch for a round of national debates on bag fees, levies and taxes in countries like Poland, Portugal and Slovakia, where annual use averages out to 466 per person. Danes, on the other hand, use but four plastic bags per year and are the standard bearers for eliminating the proliferation of the plastic bag, a key component of the marine litter that is choking oceans and seas.

Marine litter is at the heart of the EU action. A report last November from the European Commission says plastic is in the stomachs of 94 per cent of all birds in the North Sea.

In all, Europeans go through 100 billion plastic shopping bags per year. Eight billion of those yearly are let loose into the environment due to littering.



From beach to roadside, is an end in sight?
The European Union intends to crack down on the proliferation of plastic litter, zeroing in on plastic grocery bags and weaning people off them.



*"An emblematic issue of our consumer society."
Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner
for the Environment Directorate (April, 2014)*