



2011 End of the Year Director's Report

Mission Statement: *empowering an enhanced environment*

The Commission's cost benefit ratio for last year was **\$8.83** returned for every **\$1.00** invested to the City and County
Total benefit **\$401,801.00** (Figure from the Keep America Beautiful's 2011 Certified Annual Report)

News from the Keep America Beautiful National Conference:

Your Executive Director finished his certified Tree Tender training program (looking for volunteers early next year!) by planting a tree in a very run down area of New Orleans. This was interrupted by gun fire on the other side of the block, automatic gunfire to be specific. There was a drive-by shooting that killed a young man less than 100 feet from where I was working. This sad incident underlines the need for making our communities safe. Some of the greatest attributes of a safe community are green spaces, clean streets, and trees. This has been proven by many studies. Beyond this regrettable act, there was much joy when the commission was given the National First Place Award for Cigarette Litter Prevention Programs in America for our work on Lake Ouachita (please see below). Apart from the distinction, the award carries with it a \$1,000.00 donation. The Commission was also honored as a President's Circle Award recipient (administrative recognition). I also gave the presentation, "Cigarette litter, as a focus for overall litter reduction," and spoke as part of the program, "Cigarette Litter Prevention – The Next Step" at the National Conference. (My attendance was 100% covered by grants).

Statewide Cigarette Litter Prevention Tour: This was a joint venture of Keep Arkansas Beautiful and the Commission funded by the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation. Launched last year in Sherwood, this program allowed the Commission to be a significant statewide partner and promote our nationally acclaimed leading role in environmental programs as we traveled across Arkansas. Although a State program, 5 of the 14 funded events took place in Hot Springs. In total, 6,524 people were directly engaged through this unique education program.

TRASH BASH 2011 Was even bigger than in recent years with 4.175 tons of litter collected and 498 volunteers enjoying a great free lunch of Smokin' in Style BBQ, Hot Dogs, coleslaw, beans and chips, free Great Arkansas Clean-up t-shirts, over \$9,000 of prizes including a Google flat screen HD TV and a laptop computer. All the litter volunteers also received free admission to view the award winning Garvan Woodland Gardens!

Recycling Loan Program grant enables expansion: This program has been given a second in-kind grant from Coca-Cola in the form of 15 new units. With our storage site near the recycling center in downtown Hot Springs, we have been able to restart our free loan system for special events and long term loans to organizations. In the first month, we have loaned out to 7 organizations, collecting 45 bags of recycling, and we have all of the new and original units booked for loan.

Lake Ouachita Cigarette Litter Prevention Program:

This massive undertaking, involving 40 test sites, has been made possible by a grant from Philip Morris USA, an Altria company, with additional support from RAI Services Company. The study, developed by the Hot Springs/Garland County Beautification Commission and the Corps of Engineers, involved selecting each of the sites to either receive full intervention measures, or to receive no intervention and function as a placebo site.

The study compared the effect of a significant intervention that included signage, free pocket and boat/car ashtrays, personal interaction with staff, and brochures against an equal number of sites that had no intervention at all. The final figure for the intervention sites was a reduction in cigarette litter of 96%, remembering that many of the sites received volunteer clean ups. The non-intervention sites saw an increase in cigarette litter of 54%, even though several of these sites received volunteer clean ups, also. All the sites were also evaluated for general litter using the KAB Litter Index system. Although most of the sites scored well to begin with, there was still a significant reduction of 38% in overall litter at the intervention sites. This compares with a slight reduction at the non-intervention sites of 14%, once again due to the volunteer actions.

Solar Powered Commission!

The Commission's information booth is now off the grid, thanks to a grant from the Hot Springs Giving Circle. By powering our booth with this advanced solar system, we have become fully energy independent allowing a broader, better interaction using our laptop, LCD screen, and even the LCD projector to communicate our message of environmental awareness to the people of Garland County at any site. We will be showing the people of Garland County the current state of the technology and fairly demonstrating the true viability in both negative and positive terms for their own possible usage in the home and/or business situations.

There is another significant advantage to having this array in the County; we will make it know that the array is available on immediate and free loan to any city or county service needing it in an emergency

e-Day Festival 2011:

Even with the excessive heat and a storm at the very end, the e-day Festival 2011 was a great event with an independently estimated 2,000 attendees. This free family event hosted over 60 environmentally conscious businesses, organizations, and non-profits. More than 150 children received a free pumpkin growing kit from the Commission and The Master Gardeners. Live performances throughout the day included music from Chana and Randy Caylor, Shady Grove, and the Drum Circle. All the sound equipment was solar powered as was the Commission's information booth and several other vendors, making this truly a very "green" festival!

Sponsor exhibitors included the Tenenbaum Recycling Group, LLC, Mid-America Science Museum, Hot Springs Sanitation Department, New Awakenings Magazine, and Ouachita Life newspaper. Other exhibitors include; FEMA, City Plumbing Heat and Electric, Nearly New, Wal-Mart, Garland County Conservation Services, St. Joseph's Mercy Health Center, Arkansas Watershed Advisory Group, Hot Springs Stormwater Division, Geo Thermal Systems, Liberty Solar Solutions, Myers Supply, Friends of the Beautification Commission.

Solar Powered Recycling Compactor

Hot Springs is now using 21st century technology to launch the first solar-powered recycling compactor in the state, through a partnership between the Hot Springs/Garland County Beautification Commission and the Hot Springs Giving Circle. The device was placed at Hill Wheatley Plaza in downtown Hot Springs, a location where high volumes of recyclable plastic are deposited into recycling containers during times of high visitor volume. During the Beautification Commission's recent "Save Our Water - Catch the Plastic" campaign where 26 large recycling units resembling giant plastic bottles were placed in every park in Garland County along with other selected sites, each site was evaluated after an eight-week period. Hill Wheatley Plaza not only had double the average amount of plastic recycled of any other measured location, but the unit could not keep up with the amount of plastic during times of high foot traffic. In answer to this problem, the Commission researched and found a solar-powered compaction unit that could hold up to five times as much Type 1 plastic as the current recycling unit. The unit will reduce the number of times it requires emptying, thus significantly reducing fuel costs, wear and tear, and carbon emissions.

ARBOR DAY:

Arbor Day was given a brief reprieve from weather problems on Friday, April 29th when almost 600 students, along with scores of teachers and parents, enjoyed the perfect free day out including a brown bag lunch, several different educational modules covering various forest related subjects including: a nature walk, snakes, planting trees, and forestry demonstrations by the Ouachita Job Corps. Other presenters include Lake Catherine, City of Hot Springs Storm Water Dept., Garland County Conservation District, and the Hot Springs/Garland County Beautification Commission. Arbor Day 2011 was generously funded by Deltic Timber Corporation and Entergy Arkansas, Inc, Elisabeth Wagner Foundation, with support from several City departments. Due to an additional funding from Hot Springs Area Community Foundation, we will be providing additional educational materials throughout the entire year.

National Cigarette Litter Program Prototype: As part of your director's position on the Keep America Beautiful National Cigarette Litter Advisory Board, he has launched an initiative to provide prototype litter reduction procedures for Renaissance Faires across America. The first few weeks of this program in Texas have yielded significant reductions in cigarette and other types of litter.

Great American Greenway Clean Up: Was on March 26th, the second annual Great American Greenway Clean Up took place on a cold and wet Saturday. However, we had 73 volunteers from the Friends of the Parks, Hot Springs/Garland County Beautification Commission, Spa Pacers, and more. Special thanks to all invaluable help given by Hot Springs Parks and Recreation Dept., Keep America Beautiful, Keep Arkansas Beautiful, and the Hot Springs Sanitation Dept. This was an official part of Keep America Beautiful's Great American Clean Up (GAC). All our volunteers received a special GAC T-shirt! The clean up showed our great civic pride all along this very special area of Hot Springs, the Hot Springs Greenway Trail. The weight of the litter and recyclable items was a staggering 5,040 lbs! Once again, a huge thank you to our volunteers who achieved so much!

Cash for Trash:

Your Commission partnered with the TRASH BASH, Inc. team to bring one of the most successful (in terms of trash taken from the lake) litter reduction programs in the State. A record 14 volunteer teams competed to bring the most trash away from 15 sites around Lake Hamilton. Every team received \$200 for their projects from TB because they all picked up their minimum amounts, with a total of over 6,600 pounds of litter collected in one morning!

Website: www.hotspringsgreen.org

Continuing Projects for 2011

Adopt-a-City Street:

These adoptions are an important part of the City's litter reduction program. Each City street that is adopted reduces the City's workload through direct cleaning by volunteers. The signage has proven to reduce area litter by up to 25%, and the overall effect of real pride in the City's look.

Green Leader Certification: This is a joint venture with the Hot Springs Village Area Chamber of Commerce and the Commission. The innovative program gives local businesses a way to bring their green image to the public's attention in a certified manner.

Youth and Adult Education: We have made dozens of youth presentations, offering our solar, recycling, and environmental programs. We still offer our custom production of presentations to any City school or other youth educational site. In the past 12 months, we have spoken to almost 2,000 youth and over 4,000 adults, in addition to over 10,000 people reached through our events!

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