

## LITTER REDUCTION AND BEAUTIFICATION

### Keep Hall Beautiful

Keep Hall Beautiful is the local, certified affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful System, as well as the local affiliate for the Keep Georgia Beautiful program under the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Keep Hall Beautiful consists of representatives from public and private sectors from all parts of Hall County. The organization promotes a clean environment by educating citizens through various programs and media about recycling and other solid waste issues. Eight subcommittees function in the organization: Adopt-A-Stream, Beautification, Education, Finance, Membership, Public Relations, Strategic Planning and Volunteer Projects.

#### Needs/Goals

1. Keep Hall Beautiful has recognized several needs associated with waste management. There is a need to teach more youths and adults about solid waste management as well as motivate them to become involved in programs such as litter clean up and recycling. There is a need to increase the number of schools that compete for the Environmental Achievement Award given to schools that satisfy 14 specified criteria promoting a clean environment.
2. KHB would like to see an increased participation of the public and business in programs such as cell phone recycling, donation of cars to the Kidney Car Program and in an Adopt-A-Road Program.
3. Keep Hall Beautiful has also seen the need for an increase in the amount of publicity and thus number of volunteers who participate in special events such as “One of the Chipper”, “Operation Clean Sweep” and to help with the recycling efforts for “Mule Camp Market”, the “Great American Cleanup” and other community events. “One for the Chipper” is a Christmas tree chipping program intended to show people the varied methods for waste reduction and to treat wastes as resources. Involved parties include Keep Hall Beautiful, Hall County Resource Recovery Division, Hall County Road

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Maintenance Division, Hall County Sanitation Division, and the City of Gainesville Solid Waste Department.

4. Keep Hall Beautiful needs to be provided the resources and support required to assume the lead in coordinating all interested parties concerned about litter reduction and beautification in the planning area to bring about a concerted effort of all interested parties, doing their part to implement features of this plan element to effect real change.

## PROGRAMS

### Great American Cleanup

The Great American Cleanup is an annual nationwide initiative in which Keep America Beautiful requests all its affiliates to participate. The program consists of using community volunteers to conduct litter pickups, community cleanups, graffiti removal, clothes collections, illegal dumpsite cleanups and beautification projects such as planting gardens, trees and flowers. National sponsors donate goods such as garbage bags, gloves, and equipment, such as a Yardman Vacuum machine or tiller, to help with these projects. The costs associated with this program include advertising and producing brochures and flyers for promotion.

### Adopt-A-Road

“Adopt-A-Road” is a proposed program that would apply to county roadways. It is patterned after the state Adopt-A-Highway program, which pertains to state roadways. Adopt-A-Road would concentrate on county roads. The “adoptee” would agree to do litter control on at least a mile of their roadway at least four times per year and keep records of volunteers, hours spent and the amount of litter picked up. These statistics would be reported to Keep Hall Beautiful for compilation, showing how much litter is abated from this program. The program is in its planning stages at this time. Cost estimates will be forthcoming as the program is implemented.

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### Local Clean Up Efforts

Unkempt Properties is a program designed to help the city and county governments with the problem of run down properties. These private properties cannot be cleaned by governmental entities. Keep Hall Beautiful can, with the property owner's permission, take volunteers onto the private property and help with the problem. Properties that meet certain criteria are referred to Keep Hall Beautiful by either the environmental court or by code enforcement personnel. Costs associated with this program are minimal because of volunteer workers and in-kind services from the county landfill and area businesses.

Keep Hall Beautiful Work Crew consists of three paid individuals who spend forty hours per week picking up litter along county maintained roadways and cleaning up illegal dump sites. Cost for this program is approximately \$100,000 per year.

Appliance and Furniture Pick Up Week is an annual event scheduled in May that allows county residents to arrange for collection of large waste items, such as appliances and furniture. It is especially useful for citizens such as seniors, the infirm, or citizens without transportation, who would otherwise not be able to haul these materials. It is hoped that the program reduces the potential for illegal dumping of such items in order to avoid landfill fees. KHB recruits volunteers and coordinates schedules, to help get items moved to the right of way for pickup by Hall County Public Works.

### Kidney Car

The Kidney Car program allows people with unwanted cars to recycle the vehicles. The donor agrees to donate the car and fills out the proper paperwork showing ownership of the vehicle. The Kidney Foundation makes arrangements for the car to be picked up at no cost to the donor. If the vehicle is operable, it is sold at auction. If not, it is sold for scrap, and the money is used for kidney research. The donor gets to take a tax deduction for donating the unwanted car. Keep Hall Beautiful serves as a clearinghouse in connecting the donors and the Kidney Foundation and keeps records of how many unwanted vehicles are donated from Hall County each year. There is no cost to Keep Hall Beautiful at this time.

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### Mule Camp Market

Mule Camp Market is an annual three-day festival on the Gainesville downtown square. Keep Hall Beautiful organizes the recycling of cardboard from the vendors and plastic soda bottles and cans from the festivalgoers. KHB also staffs an educational booth to distribute educational literature on recycling, litter prevention, beautification, composting and proper solid waste disposal. The recycling and the staffing of the booth are all done by volunteers. The cost of this program is approximately \$150 for booth space.

### Crimes Against the Environment

A local event, Crimes Against the Environment, is an annual class for law enforcement personnel. It is offered to the participants at no cost to them and gives them POST (Police Officers Standards and Training) certification hours. The class is coordinated by Keep Hall Beautiful and taught by personnel from the Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division and other agencies. The subject matter helps anyone, who has the authority to write citations or deals with environmental crimes, such as deputies, policemen, judges and prosecutors keep updated on state laws and regulations. Costs for this class are approximately \$250.

### Programs for Schools

Waste In Place is a program offered to teachers at no cost. The class shows teachers how to incorporate solid waste management practices as well as reinforce the message of litter prevention and recycling into any curriculum they teach. Keep Hall Beautiful coordinates the program. Keep Georgia Beautiful provides the class instructor and all written materials. Costs associated with this program are minimal.

### Beautification

Keep Hall Beautiful has partnered with the South Hall Kiwanis, the DOT, area businesses, schools and the City of Oakwood on a beautification project on the I-985 off ramps on Exit 16. The medians in the area have been tilled, planted with flowers and mulched. Area businesses have donated flowers and mulch. Keep Hall Beautiful provided weeding, watering and litter control. Plans for expanding this project are being discussed at this time. Businesses along other exits on I-985 will be approached to

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provide funding for beautification of their exits. The long-range goal is to beautify all exits. The streetscape program in Daugherty County is a good example of this type of program. Costs will be determined by the kind of plants used in each area and size of each project.

The "Vehicle Litter Incident Report" is a program whereby concerned citizens can fill out a form, supplied by Keep Hall Beautiful or any of the local law enforcement agencies, to report observed incidents of littering from vehicles. The tag number, date and place of the violation are taken down and a series of check boxes, which provide information identifying the vehicle and the violator, are filled out. The form is sent to the Keep Hall Beautiful office, where the information is reviewed and sent to the proper law enforcement agency for processing. The violator is then contacted about the incident. This report is an education tool, because at this time, no case can be made in court because of the lack of prosecutable evidence.

### Needs/Goals

1. A Litter Index is performed annually to measure the impact of litter prevention programs in the community.
2. A Cost to Benefit Ratio is done annually to show the correlation between money received and services rendered.
3. The above mentioned programs should strive to ensure that the waste reduction methods and procedures are brought to the general public's attention.
4. A means to recognize those participating in the Adopt-A-Road program that does not rely on road signs, due to a goal of reducing the number of road signs.

## Adopt-A-Stream

Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) is a program with a three-part focus: To monitor water quality both chemically and biologically, to clean up streams, and to educate the public on the importance of good water quality.

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At this time, the local Adopt-A-Stream program has 21 groups who have volunteered to adopt a one-mile stream segment. When a stream is adopted, the “adoptee” agrees to do litter control in the streams and the surrounding area, and to monitor the water quality in the stream either chemically or biologically. Inspections are made to determine what area is in the most need of clean up. Plans are then made to meet this need. Volunteers from the area are recruited to carry out stream clean ups. Statistics are kept on the water monitoring and how much litter is gathered from the area. The water testing results are reported to the state and the litter statistics are reported to Keep Hall Beautiful, who in turn, sends reports to Keep Georgia Beautiful.

The main source of litter seems to come from visitors to the streams. Secluded areas seem to be the target of those who practice habitual littering.

Recruitment of neighborhood volunteers should increase a sense of pride in the appearance of an area, producing improved standards of cleanliness.

### Needs/Goals

1. There is a need to create awareness for a cleaner area for the neighborhood to enjoy. By involving local citizens in the clean up, the awareness and pride in the Flat Creek area will increase. Other stream segments will be targeted as needed.

2. A public education and outreach program is planned for the Gainesville and Hall County Schools to heighten awareness as to how on-going practices of litter control will impact the future of our community. Four stream clean ups are planned per year. Approximate costs for a stream segment cleanup are \$250.

## Graffiti Hotline

The Graffiti Hotline is a program whose goal is to continually reduce the number of occurrences by giving citizens a way to report graffiti locations.

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Once a call is placed to 911 (although there is an official hotline number), the determination is made as to whether the location is in Gainesville or the county or is on private property. The calls for the city are referred to the Public Works-Street Division, the county calls are referred to Hall County Traffic Engineering, and the private property calls are referred to the Boys and Girls Clubs. If mailboxes are involved, the call goes to the federal post office police.

Volunteer groups officially authorized to remove graffiti will receive information regarding graffiti on private property and make arrangements for removal with the property owner. Boys and Girls Clubs remove graffiti on public property using county and city manpower and equipment.

Although the calls are separated, the city and the county use the same high-powered pressure washer to remove graffiti, usually within 48 hours. The clean up time of 48 hours helps discourage reoccurrence. The graffiti problems seem to be somewhat seasonal. In cold weather the number of calls decreases.

Educating the public through the use of flyers and refrigerator magnets should help heighten awareness and decrease the number of occurrences.

It seems that the present practices will be adequate for the ten-year planning period; however, if they prove to become less effective, modified plans will be considered and implemented as needed.

### Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee

The Chamber Beautification Committee works on planned projects to promote, enhance and assist in the plans for beautification. Each subcommittee selects projects that are implemented through the committee. The committee holds an annual Arbor Day observance and recognizes private individuals and businesses with periodic beautification awards.

## Hall County Code Enforcement Division

The Hall County Code Enforcement Division is a certified law enforcement agency that enforces county ordinances and state laws relating to a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to, property maintenance and environmental issues.

Their primary focus is concentrated on activities dealing with crimes against the environment such as illegal dumping, property maintenance issues, littering, zoning, land use issues, inoperable vehicles, dilapidated structures, unsafe living conditions and housing code violations.

When complaints have been received, or a neighborhood has been surveyed for environmental crimes, officers go into the neighborhood and hand out bilingual information. The pamphlets contain information explaining who the agency is, what they do, and what the violations are. The pamphlets also contain phone numbers for questions, for reporting violations, and they contain the county ordinances and their code numbers. They also explain that failure to correct a violation within the specified timeframe may result in a court citation being issued, with fines ranging up to \$1,000 and 60 days in jail.

Hall County Code Enforcement's goal is for Hall County to be a model of excellence that promotes a sustainable quality of life by partnering with citizens and businesses to make this a community of choice for living, working and leisure activities. This will be accomplished through varied approaches and ideas, while working together with other groups toward this goal, as well as meeting the needs of the Citizens of Hall County.

## Gainesville Clean & Green

Clean & Green is a new city program as of February 2004. The major goal is to first maintain, then enhance major arterial roadways into Gainesville, Georgia, as well as its business corridors.



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Community pride and involvement are key elements of the Clean & Green program. Using existing plantings and litter pick up arrangements, the initial plan is to provide basic maintenance as well as explore enhancement possibilities. The way an area looks either improves or damages business and city reputations. Businesses will be asked to financially support the maintenance and enhancement efforts. Appropriate signage and other publicity will acknowledge their participation in this program.

Large and small businesses will be involved. Smaller businesses may choose to participate through industry and trade associations, civic clubs and geographical groupings. Families and individuals will be given the opportunity to honor a person of their choice. The general public will be invited to participate through fundraising at public events.

Clean & Green will coordinate its efforts with existing organizations, including: Keep Hall Beautiful, Hall County Public Works, Hall County Resource Recovery Division, Hall County's Parks and Leisure Services, the Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee, Friends of the Parks, GA DOT, and various gardening clubs. Clean & Green supports education efforts in the schools from pre-school to college as well as general community efforts to raise consciousness about not littering and caring for our living environment.

### Friends of the Parks

Friends of the Parks (FOTP) is an organization committed to promoting beautification through greenways and through ongoing beautification efforts to parks, trails, entrances and other Gainesville common areas.

Interested citizens take part in programs such as Adopt a Bed, "Honor someone you love by the purchase of a park bench or tree" and Park Rooters.

Adopt a Bed is a program where local groups, such as Eagle Scouts, "adopt" a flower bed within a park and maintain the flower beds for a one year period.

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“Honor someone you love by the purchase of a park bench or tree” is a program where a park bench or tree is purchased and then placed in one of the parks. The bench or tree honoring the person for whom it was placed displays a plaque.

The Park Rooter program solicits donations for the funding of day-to-day operations for the organization. This is a donation only program.

One of the major projects at this time is the restoration of the Rock Creek Greenway. The greenway includes Ivy Terrace, Wilshire Trails and Longwood Parks. Land is being acquired along the linear corridor, and a detention pond will be constructed. This is not only essential for beautification, it also stabilizes stream banks, helps in the mitigation of storm water runoff, and creates walking trails to connect downtown Gainesville with Lake Lanier.

Friends of the Parks is also committed to restoring, preserving and developing a green way network that provides attractive, convenient routes for jogging, biking or walking to nearby destinations.

### Needs/Goals

1. Commitment from more volunteers is needed to promote efforts in continuation of preservation and restoration.
2. All programs will be ongoing through the next 5 years.
3. Plans are to raise \$500,000 for a permanent endowment for “Let’s Connect Gainesville’s Green-ways” through citizen contributions is now underway. Expenses for 2004 are estimated to be just over one million dollars.

### Litter Deputies

“Litter Deputies” are members of the Federated Garden Club, who have been “deputized” to help catch and stop litter law offenders.

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The program was developed to catch contractors, builders, businesses and others who have been practicing littering and illegal dumping.

The deputized citizens take down the tag number of vehicles and the name of the company, if it is visible, and report the offence to the Sheriff's office for disposition.

## Hall County Master Gardeners

Hall County Master Gardeners is a program that focuses on beautification through preparing and planting flowerbeds and gardens. Clean up and policing of the areas are conducted prior to preparing and planting the beds.

Hall County Master Gardeners works with a variety of programs to enhance beautification projects. Some of the projects include stream cleanups with the Gainesville Adopt-a-Stream group and Elachee Nature Science Center. Other projects have included starting new garden clubs, ongoing maintenance or garden installation, clean ups at the Humane Society, donation of plants and installation of raised beds at the Sunrise Camp, helping with the Rivers Alive "Help Keep Waterways Healthy" program, installation of a butterfly garden at Lula Elementary School, maintaining the butterfly garden at Mt. Vernon School, maintaining flower beds at Wilshire Trails park, and planning and implementing spring plantings at Riverside Park.

## Newtown Florist Club

In the 1950s housewives in the African American neighborhood of Gainesville started a social service club to collect money for funeral wreaths. Over the years, Newtown Florist Club members have become leaders for civil rights and community improvement.

Members of the club often take on the role of environmental activists.

The Newtown Florist Club has developed a land trust to buy neighborhood houses, which come up for sale. The thought is that it's better to find low-income buyers than let the houses fall into the hands of outsiders and even drug tenants, which is already beginning to happen.

## Lake Lanier Association

Founded in 1966, the LLA is the oldest group working to protect Lake Lanier and to preserve its valuable legacy for future generations. The LLA sponsors many programs to keep the water and shorelines clean and beautiful for all users.

Today, the group has grown to a 5,500 member organization with a variety of missions and programs, acting as an education and knowledge resource for many government and private groups interested in the health of Lake Lanier.

Lake Lanier Association has organized and run an annual Shore Sweep program since 1988. The association organizes concerned citizens to help clean the shores of the lake by picking up trash and removing boat dock floatation. Each year, hundreds of volunteers participate in Shore Sweep. Since its inception, civic groups, youth groups, individuals and businesses have removed over 300 tons of trash from the lake.

## Clean Hall Task Force

No longer active as of this writing, the Clean Hall Task Force was a multi-agency group that met under the coordination of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce. Represented on the task force were chamber officials, city and county officials, city and county law enforcement, courts officials, code enforcement, Keep Hall Beautiful, Gainesville Community Foundation, and concern citizens. The task force was concerned with aesthetics and quality of life issues of the community and their impacts on local economic development efforts in attracting new industries to the area.

The focus was to combine efforts and partner with different agencies and governmental departments to enhance the living conditions and aesthetics in the area. The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce spearheaded the group and helped to promote programs that would accomplish this goal.

The task force was instrumental in securing a private anonymous donation to fund Keep Hall Beautiful's litter crew for the first year.

## Hall County Sheriff's Department

The Hall County Sheriff's Department has been and continues to be very supportive of local litter prevention and beautification efforts.

The "Inmate Trash Detail" has been in place for the past 3 years; however, it has been less active the last year due to the crime rate and available staff. The detail provides litter control on county roadways on the weekends and statistics are reported to Keep Hall Beautiful.

Deputizing Garden Club Members is a program where concerned citizens are deputized in an official swearing in of Anti-Litter Official Deputies. This ceremony is conducted after a criminal background check has been completed. An Oath of Anti-Litter Official is signed and presented by the Sheriff. These "deputies" have the authorization to report observed illegal dumping by contractors and builders and report vehicles transporting unsecured loads.

### **Better Home Town for Flowery Branch**

Better Home Town (BHT) for Flowery Branch is a group of concerned citizens and volunteers who strive to make and keep the City of Flowery Branch a cleaner, more aesthetic and safer community in which to live, work and play. This program is sponsored by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. One of the benefits of being a Better Home Town is being partnered with the University of Georgia's Department of Environmental Design.

The program consists of four committees including Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Development. These committees promote beautification and cleanliness by holding neighborhood cleanups, planting and maintaining flowerbeds, and by erecting signs, which have been designed by the Environmental Design Department of the University of Georgia.

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The goal is to raise public awareness and to educate citizens through multi media ad campaigns, a calendar of events, and by upholding the City ordinances that Flowery Branch is a city that will not tolerate trash and debris.

Flowers for the Branch is a program where lily beds are planted and maintained.

Better Home Town has various rock planter/ retainer wall signs, including welcome and directional signs that have flower beds planted and maintained around them.

When littered roadways are reported to the Better Home Town office, community service workers are assigned to clean the roadways. Maps of the area are furnished and a time frame given to have the litter pick up done. Community service workers report that the job has been finished and the job is inspected by someone from the City's Better Home Town office.

### Needs/Goals

1. Future plans include a new sign at the intersection of Atlanta Highway and Phil Niekro Blvd., where flowers will be planted and maintained.

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