

Keep America Beautiful Features Rural Recycling Efforts Ahead of America Recycles Day, November 15

Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act was sent to the House after Senate passage in July. It would create a pilot rural recycling program at the EPA.

STAMFORD, CT, UNITED STATES, November 1, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As legislation to improve recycling for America's rural communities in considered by Congress, Keep America Beautiful® is highlighting rural recycling programs and efforts within the KAB affiliate network as potential models for communities to follow should this legislation pass Congress. This, as Keep America Beautiful (KAB), the nation's leading community improvement nonprofit organization, celebrates America Recycles Day® on November 15.



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Keep America Beautiful is driven by the work and passion of 700 affiliates across the country. From individual affiliate work to Keep America Beautiful affiliates working together, these efforts show the impact and the need to increase access to recycling for Americans living in rural communities. Current national legislation is aimed at doing just that. The Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act of 2022 (S.3742) passed the Senate unanimously on July 28. If signed into law, it will require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish pilot rural recycling programs. Potential grantees may include states, local governments, Indian tribes, or public-private partnerships. The bill has been sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.

“There are 19,724 communities in America, and each may have vastly different recycling options, ranging from state-of-the-art single stream systems to no recycling options at all,” said Keep

America Beautiful President and CEO, Jennifer Lawson. "New legislation can bring sorely needed funding and support for recycling innovation. For decades, the affiliate network of Keep America Beautiful has been developing and supporting diverse local recycling solutions that can be scaled, shared, and reapplied in communities across the country."

Here are a few of those efforts:

Keep Stockwell Beautiful (Indiana) - Twice a year, Keep Stockwell Beautiful offers their Bulky Trash/Tire/Electronics and Medicine collection which results in about half of what's collected from residents being recycled. In March of this year, they had one of their biggest collections; 44,000 pounds collected and over 20,000 pounds recycled. Over 200 people attended, which is quite impressive for a town with a population short of 500. 525 tires were also collected.

The program is free of cost as part of the county's Solid Waste District.

Keep Crystal Springs Beautiful (Mississippi) - With a population of under 5000, the City of Crystal Springs offers recycling to citizens who live in the city limits at no cost to them. Residents can obtain recycling bins from the Water Department and recycling is picked up curbside on Wednesdays. There is also a drop off station located at the Public Works Department and several recycling bins located throughout downtown. Items collected include flattened cardboard boxes, magazines, office paper, brown paper bags, paperboard, junk mail, phone books, newspapers, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, #1-#7 plastic bottles, and containers.

"We have a public works employee that goes around and collects the recycling curbside in the neighborhoods and empties the recycling bins throughout downtown. That employee then takes the recycling to a local recycling center," said Felicia Thompson of Keep Crystal Springs Beautiful.

The trailer Keep Crystal Springs Beautiful uses for pickup was donated by Keep Mississippi Beautiful. There are currently over 1000 households that utilize this service.

Keep Utopia Beautiful (Texas) - Keep Utopia Beautiful's signature program is Utopia Recycles, a free community drop-off program that provides recycling access to residents and businesses in a 3-county area. The site collects and recycles a large variety of household recyclables, motor oil and batteries, and provides event recycling and document destruction services. Since the program started in 2009, they have recycled 1,501,320 pounds of recyclables through Keep Texas Beautiful's Keep Texas Recycling program. This unincorporated community of 200 has been a mentor for communities all over the state, large and small.

According to Rachel Hering with Keep Texas Beautiful: "This program is amazing. They have won the Governor's Community Achievement Award three times and have a scholarship program for seniors that volunteer time doing cleanups at the recycle center. KUB is proof that great things are happening in small communities!"

The program is funded through grants, a partnership with the county, fundraising, and through the sale of materials through Keep Texas Recycling's rural recycling cooperative. Questions and ways to help shape and design other programs can be found through Keep Texas Recycling's technical assistance. Visit ktb.org/keptexasrecycling for more information.

Keep Alliance Beautiful, Keep Keith County Beautiful, and Keep Kimball Beautiful (Nebraska) - The hub and spoke model is a collective effort of western Nebraska affiliates to increase recycling in Nebraska's rural communities. The model was developed 15 years ago, based on the KAB Model for Change.

According to a January 2022 [article by the Omaha Daily Record](#), Nebraska's recycling rate sits at just 17%, as reported by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center in 2015. But it's not for a lack of desire to recycle, it's a lack of access. The hub and spoke model has opened those opportunities for communities that don't generate substantial amounts of waste.

"A hub and spoke program is essentially a logistics system, creating opportunities for smaller entities to tie into a large entity. It's cost effective, it allows for collaboration, and people can share costs which is why it works really well in the recycling business," said Keep Keith County Beautiful Executive Director, Chris Vail.

The Nebraska affiliates involved started the program in 2016 and 25 communities take part. Along with the hub and spoke collection, education plays a vital role.

"We want to find future leaders for recycling. When they grow up in these little towns and they are taught to recycle in kindergarten, by the time they graduate from college, it is a lifestyle habit. It doesn't matter where they go, what they do, they will be passionate about recycling," Vail said.

See the full KAB interview with Keep Keith County Beautiful Executive Director Chris Vail here: [KAB Interview on Hub & Spoke Program Success in Western Nebraska](#)

Learn more about Keep America Beautiful's [America Recycles Day here](#).

Sponsors for America Recycles Day 2022 include Heineken, International Bottled Water Association (IBWA), Mutual of Omaha, and Thomas Ashbourne Craft Spirits.

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