

### *The Facts On Trash*

If a caveman had thrown out a glass bottle one million years ago, it might still be sitting in your backyard today. Did you know it takes that long for one glass bottle to decompose? Check out more litter facts\* below that might surprise you.

#### **Litter in Georgia and Beyond**

- Three out of four Georgia motorists say they have seen trash thrown out of a vehicle, yet only one in 10 admit to littering from their vehicle.
- Eight out of 10 motorists believe people litter because it is easier than saving trash to discard later.
- Each Georgia resident disposes of approximately 6.3 pounds of trash each day.
- Littered neighborhoods can result in property values being lowered by as much as 15 percent.
- Eighteen percent of all littered items end up in our streams and waterways as pollution. (Keep America Beautiful)
- Cigarette litter represents more than 20 percent of the litter collected in many community clean-up initiatives. (Keep America Beautiful)
- The most commonly found items during roadside litter clean-ups are cigarette butts, fast food wrappers and aluminum cans.

#### **Litter Life Spans**

- What you throw out today may still be around in the year 3000! Check out decomposition times for some commonly littered items.
  - Glass bottles: 1 *million* years
  - Plastic foam cups: More than 500 years
  - Aluminum cans: 200-500 years
  - Plastic bags: 10-20 years
  - Cigarette butts: 1-5 years
  - Piece of paper: 2-4 weeks

## Local Programs Pitch In

- More than 400 organizations are currently active in Georgia's Adopt-A-Highway program. These groups pick up trash on about 550 miles of Georgia's highways and interstates.
- There are 67 local Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliates covering more than 75 percent of the state's population. (Keep Georgia Beautiful)
- Currently, for every dollar of public funds invested in local affiliate programs, citizens receive an average of \$10 of value-added benefits measured in private contributions, donated volunteer time, in-kind goods and services and avoided costs to government. (Keep America Beautiful)

## Your Tax Dollars At Work

- The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) spends about \$14 million annually to clean up roadside trash in the state, and local governments spend hundreds of thousands more dollars to keep litter off of 96,818 miles of locally-maintained roads.
- GDOT is currently responsible for maintaining 18,000 center lane state route miles and 5,000 interstate shoulder miles.
- About 223 GDOT routine maintenance crews, 59 prison crews, weekend probationers (logging more than 10,600 hours) and more than 260 volunteer Adopt-A-Highway organizations regularly pick up litter.

\* All facts and figures were compiled from the Georgia Department of Transportation Web site unless otherwise noted.