



Tire Amnesty Day May 19, 2007

Each year, a large portion of the 273 million tires discarded in the United States are illegally dumped, presenting difficult and costly clean-up challenges for small communities. In response to this growing problem, the Alleghany Highlands declared Saturday, May 19, Tire Amnesty Day, allowing residents to easily dispose of unwanted tires free of charge thanks to the generous financial support of The Alleghany Foundation. From 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, volunteers and staff from the towns of Iron Gate, Clifton Forge, and the City of Covington manned stopping points at the county's Island Ford transfer station on Valley Ridge Road, directing cars to loading platforms where 8 tractor trailers waited to be filled with an estimated 75 tons of used tires.

“Scrap tires have become one of the largest and most problematic sources of waste in the country,” says Jon Lanford, Alleghany County director of Public Works. “Until the 1970's, when new safety initiatives were passed and steel belted radials became popular, millions of tires were used to re-cap worn tires on passenger vehicles.”

Since that time, tires previously used as re-treads started making their way to municipal landfills where they quickly became undesirable due to their large volume, durability, and tendency to rise to the surface causing damage to landfill covers. Old tires have also been accumulating for decades on private property as well as public rights of way.

“Piles of old waste tires exist all over Virginia,” says Lanford. “It used to be a common practice for land owners to dump or allow others to dump used tires on their property. But those old stockpiles present a number of public health and safety risks.”

Lanford explains, “Tires shelter vermin and collect water, creating an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. Tires also burn easily and serve as an ignition source for wildfires, causing air and ground water pollution.”

Even after the recycling initiatives in the late 1980's, when many states including Virginia passed legislation regulating the management of scrap tires, illegal dumping has continued, creating eyesores and prompting communities to organize regional tire amnesty days to encourage residents to bring in old tires and dispose of them legally and free of charge.

“There are actually a number of great ways in which waste tires can be beneficially used,” says Lanford. “Cement plants use tire derived fuels to fire their boilers. Tire rubber can be chipped and used in civil engineering projects, and as landscaping and playground mulch. Unfortunately, for a small community like ours, collection is costly. Without a funding source like the Alleghany Foundation, we couldn't afford to sponsor the event.”

Several years ago, the Foundation provided \$10,500 for a very successful Tire Amnesty Day. This year, the Foundation awarded a grant for \$40,000, furthering the

effort to rid the Alleghany Highlands of tires dumped over banks, along roads, on National Forest property and other inappropriate places.

“The past effort was such a success that the Foundation board immediately recognized the benefit of holding two more Tire Amnesty Days over the next two years,” says Beth Webb, executive director of the Alleghany Foundation. “It’s the Foundation’s mission to improve the quality of life in our community. Promoting public health and preserving the integrity of our National forests is directly beneficial to all of our citizens.”

Lanford agrees. “Gary Hepler and Tim Kimberlin from the Department of Public Works have done a great job working with all the local governments and conservationists from the Isaac Walton League to coordinate this very worthwhile effort. We are all extremely grateful to the Alleghany Foundation for making Tire Amnesty Day possible. We believe they will find it to be money well spent.”

The Alleghany Foundation has granted over \$24 million to the following organizations for the purpose of improving the quality of life in the Alleghany Highlands.

Alleghany County
Alleghany County Parks and Recreation
Alleghany County Public Schools
Alleghany County Sheriff's Office
Alleghany County United Fire and Rescue Association
Alleghany Health District
Alleghany Highlands Arts & Crafts Center
Alleghany Highlands Arts Council
Alleghany Highlands Community Services Board
Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Authority
Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation
Alleghany Highlands Free Clinic
Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society
Alleghany Highlands YMCA
Alleghany Historical Society
Alleghany Humane Society
Alleghany Mountain Radio
American Diabetes Association
American Red Cross
Appalfolks of America
Art Museum of Western Virginia
Bath County
Bath County Health Department
Bath County Historical Society
Blue Ridge Public Television
Boiling Springs Elementary School
Boiling Springs Fire Department
C.O.P.E.
Callaghan Elementary School PTO
Charles P. Jones Memorial Library

City of Covington
Clifton Forge Little League
Clifton Forge Main Street
Clifton Forge Nursery School
Clifton Forge Public Library
Clifton Forge Volunteer Fire Department
Covington City Schools
Covington Fire Department
Covington Rescue Squad
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
Diabetes Education Support Group
Falling Spring Elementary School PTO
Falling Spring Fire Department
Falling Spring Rescue Squad
Greater Alleghany Highlands School Health Consortium
Jackson River Enterprises
Jackson river Technical Center
League of Older Americans
Mill Mountain Theatre
Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District
Mountain View Elementary School PTO
Rockbridge Area Community Services Board
Safehome Systems
Science Museum of Western Virginia
Scott Hill Foundation, Inc.
Sharon Elementary School PTO
Sharon Volunteer Fire Department
Shenandoah Autism Center
Southwest Virginia AHEC
Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Foodbank
Special Olympics
Total Action Against Poverty
Town of Clifton Forge
Town of Iron Gate
Unified Human Services Transportation System (RADAR)
West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
Western Virginia Emergency Medical Service Council