



## Keep It Clean and Green: 27<sup>th</sup> ODOT Trash-OFF Set for April 11

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Spring cleaning in Oklahoma means more than just tackling that overflowing bedroom closet and those cluttered kitchen cabinets. It's time to clean up Oklahoma's great outdoors, which could use a break from all those litterbugs.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is partnering with Keep Oklahoma Beautiful for the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Trash-OFF event April 11. This statewide one-day cleanup is Oklahoma's signature event in the Great American Cleanup, which is the nation's largest community improvement program. However, communities, counties and volunteer groups may participate in the Great American Cleanup anytime starting in March through May 31.

"Oklahoma is fortunate to have caring people who want to protect and preserve our state's natural beauty," said Melody Johnson, ODOT Beautification coordinator. "We typically have all 77 counties participate in the Trash-OFF and Great American Cleanup programs illustrating Oklahomans' commitment to Keep Our Land Grand."

Registered Trash-OFF participants are eligible for free supplies and promotional items from Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. Those items include free trash bags from Glad, safety vests and gloves (in limited quantities) from Warren CAT, Great American Cleanup banners provided by Devon Energy to gain visibility for projects and T-shirts for project coordinators.

ODOT additionally supports the Trash-OFF by serving as a collection point at its Oklahoma City warehouse for KOB's supplies. Those are then transported to each ODOT county maintenance yard for pickup by volunteer groups.

Oklahoma's Great American Cleanup effort in 2014 included 401 cleanup events sponsored across the state from March through May. More than 45,000 volunteers in all 77 counties removed more than 3 million pounds of litter. The combined effort of these events had an economic impact of more than \$5 million in money saved or costs avoided by state, county and municipal governments, according to KOB.

The project has been so successful that ODOT received national recognition from Keep America Beautiful and the U.S. Department of Transportation in both 2014 and 2012.

Volunteers are doing more than just picking up trash along highways. Other event ideas from KOB include flower and tree plantings, recycling drives, educational workshops, graffiti removal and giving fresh coats of paint to dilapidated buildings. However, the majority of volunteer groups clean up litter along roadsides, in parks and forests, along streams and at schools and neighborhoods.

And those who clean along Oklahoma's roadways have found plenty of unique items through the years. Volunteers have found everything from cell phones, lost photographs, cash, tires and musical instruments to more unusual items such as a prosthetic leg, a tanning bed and even an unused plane ticket.

ODOT will honor the Best Overall Effort and the Best Rookie Effort with awards in November at KOB's Environmental Excellence Celebration. Other awards highlighted at this event are the Devon Great American Cleanup Achievement Award and the OGE Energy Corp Innovation Award. The event also will mark KOB's celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.

Community groups and individuals may register for both events online at [www.keepoklahomabeautiful.com](http://www.keepoklahomabeautiful.com) or call 405-286-9141. Registration for the GAC must be done by April 24 while Trash-OFF participants must register by April 3.

- [www.odot.org](http://www.odot.org) -

(Editors and News Directors: FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, please contact ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

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