

# Madison County celebrates America Recycles Day

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**EDWARDSVILLE** – **America Recycles Day** is observed annually on Nov. 15. This year, the sustainability staff in Madison County's Planning & Development Department has been supporting that effort with a number of waste-reduction and anti-litter programs including a tire collection, community clean-up and electronics recycling drive, pumpkin composting program, and used shoe collection.

To kick off the season, **Madison County** gathered 15,600 tires during a tire collection on August 23 and 24. County staff coordinated the effort as 18 municipalities and 21 townships participated in the event and delivered a total of 117 truckloads of old, non-usable tires. This is the 16th collection held in Madison County since the program's inception and over 300,000 tires have been collected. The event was paid for by Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) as part of a nationwide initiative to prevent the spread of the Zika virus. Tires collected this year were taken by Earth Services of Benton, Ill. to Marion, Ky. for shredding and recycling/reuse.

During October, the Madison County Planning & Development Department sponsored a community cleanup day for Fort Russell Township. Community members were encouraged to drop off their large trash items including furniture, mattresses, appliances and electronics at the Fort Russell Highway Department Highway Shed in Moro, Ill. Residents took full advantage of the opportunity as they dropped off over 16 tons of waste for the landfill, as well as more than 6.5 tons of electronics to be recycled during the two-day event. Fort Russell Township Highway Commissioner Todd Shaw said area residents were grateful for the opportunity to drop off these items.

"I know the community is very appreciative of having a way to dispose of their large items and electronics," Shaw said. "I am grateful that Madison County Planning and Development has been so helpful both this year and in years past with these clean up events. It would be very difficult to do it without their assistance."

More recently, the Planning & Development Department piloted the "Pumpkin Purge" composting event on Saturday, Nov. 5. Nationally, over 30 percent of the total food supply goes uneaten, and much of that ends up in landfills. The "Pumpkin Purge" program provided an opportunity for residents and businesses to drop off their old pumpkins and gourds for composting which, in turn, keeps them out of local landfills. The purpose of this project, besides keeping methane-producing organic materials out of landfills, was to educate the community on the basics and benefits of composting.

Madison County Government's Planning & Development Department funded the program and Alton School District agreed to host the event on the grounds of the Motivational Achievement Center for the event. Both St. Louis Composting and Senior Services Plus collected and composted the donated pumpkins. More than 1,500 pounds of pumpkins were dropped off at this year's event. Plans to expand the program to other areas in the County next year are already underway.

In early November, Madison County schools and local residents participated in a shoe collection to donate over 1,500 pairs of shoes to the Shoe Crew Water Project. Three hundred million shoes go into landfills in the US annually. The Shoe Crew Water Project picks up donated, used and new shoes to give them a second life by selling the shoes to exporters who, in turn, sell the shoes to retailers in high needs areas.



Proceeds from the shoe sales fund well drilling rigs, water purification systems, and hand pumps to bring clean, fresh drinking water to those who thirst worldwide. Shoe Crew Water Project's work reduces landfill waste, puts shoes on bare feet, and provides clean water in impoverished villages to facilitate better health, hygiene, farming and livelihoods throughout the world.



