

Madison County hosts municipal and township tire collection

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EDWARDSVILLE — Municipalities and townships rolled through Madison County during a two-day event as part of an effort to reduce environmental pollution and minimize the threat to public health.

More than 10,000 tires were dropped off at the County Highway Department's Facility in Marine on Oct. 17 and 18. County staff coordinated the effort as 21 municipalities and 20 townships participated in the event and delivered a total of 77 truckloads.

"This is the 17th collection held in Madison County since the program's inception," Planning and Development Administrator Matt Brandmeyer said. "The county has collected more than 310,000 tires."

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency paid for the event as part of a nationwide initiative to prevent the spread of the Zika virus.

"Old tires often fill with stagnant water where mosquitoes typically breed," Brandmeyer said. "By sponsoring tire collections, the IEPA is hoping to remove an easily-identifiable source of mosquitoes."

He said tires also pose a fire hazard. As a petroleum product tires can become an ignition source for fires, which causes air pollution and the oily runoff contaminates soil and water resources, he said.

In 1989, tires were banned from Illinois landfills. Although tire retailers include a surcharge that should pay for the disposal of old tires, many tires end up dumped along the roadside, in waterways, or in low-lying areas instead of being properly disposed.

As a result, municipalities and townships regularly sweep common dump sites to pick up tires and are burdened with storing the tires until a collection event is scheduled.

Tires collected this year were taken by Earth Services of Benton, Ill. to Marion, Ky. for shredding and recycling/reuse.