



TDOT
Department of
Transportation



2023

LITTER GRANT ANNUAL REPORT

Tennessee Department of Transportation | Programs Report



Executive Summary

This public report describes statewide achievements and operations of the Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT) litter abatement and litter prevention education programs, during calendar year 2022. TDOT's programming was funded through dedicated revenue from Tennessee's Soft Drink and Malt Beverage industries, and demonstrates longstanding commitments to beautification, litter prevention and community recycling programs across the state. This annual report is required by law (namely, TCA § 67-4-402 and TCA § 57-5-201) to be updated and issued by March 31st.

CONTENTS

5 VISION

Litter is a substantial issue for Tennessee, but all Tennesseans can play a part in reducing litter, changing behavior, and educating fellow Tennesseans. Highlighted in this section is the Vision for a litter-free Tennessee, how the public can report litter, and how all individuals can prevent litter.

10 TAKING ACTION

TDOT's litter prevention programming involves both cleaning up the state and educating the public about the harmful impacts of litter. This is done through widespread statewide efforts and constant engagement with local partners. This section highlights TDOT's comprehensive and innovative litter prevention programs, including TDOT's Litter Grant, the Litter Hotline, Keep Tennessee Beautiful, Adopt-A-Highway, and the Nobody Trashes Tennessee litter prevention campaign.

23 PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The presence of litter impacts communities and individuals in a variety of ways. This section highlights how TDOT's litter prevention programming is combatting litter through a focus on preserving water quality, fostering scenic partnerships, and updating Tennessee-specific research.

29 REFERENCES

Information highlighted in this section includes program revenues, the 2022 Litter Grant funding distribution by county, and other program performance measures and information.



GARDEN CLUB



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Figure 1. Donated paper garden bags and reusable tarps from the Home Depot were distributed to the public during a Nobody Trashes Tennessee covered load enforcement event in Williamson County in April 2022.

VISION

A Vision for a Litter-Free Tennessee

Reducing litter is critical to keeping roadways safe, promoting healthy and vibrant communities, and maintaining the natural scenic beauty of Tennessee. Through funding made possible by Tennessee's Soft Drink and Malt Beverage industries, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) provides comprehensive litter prevention programs and much-needed services that deeply impact Tennesseans daily. TDOT's program partners investigate crime, maintain equipment, restore habitats, expand recycling, teach students and more by participating in these programs.

A common theme throughout the programs listed in this report is educating the public on appropriate litter behavior, the harmful effects of litter, and supporting local partnerships for litter pickup operations. TDOT's programs are nationally acclaimed, having won multiple awards from Keep America Beautiful, the Public Relations Society of America, and others. The programs are innovative, yet proven, strategies for how best to amplify the efforts of local governments, non-profits, community groups and volunteers. TDOT is invested in preventing, abating, and picking up litter throughout Tennessee. Annually, the department spends more than \$23.2 million on the programs found in this report and right-of-way litter pickup contracts.

Alone, TDOT spends more than \$23.2 million annually to clean up litter and educate the public.



Tennessee is a state abundant with scenic landscapes, and rugged natural beauty. Tennesseans are proud of their state, and disheartened by the presence of litter on roadsides, in waterways, and in their communities. The comprehensive litter prevention education and abatement offerings outlined in this report are award winning and nationally recognized as best practices. Each of the programs highlighted are ways in which TDOT partners with local governments, community groups, businesses, and non-profits in order to be good stewards, and bring about positive change, for our great state.

Reporting Litter

Tennesseans have two options to report individuals that litter and pieces of roadside litter statewide. TDOT maintains a pair of toll-free hotlines, which serve to educate litterbugs and better direct Operations staff to problem areas that need attention.

Litter Hotline: If you witness an act of littering, report the act via the Litter Hotline. File a complaint over the phone, at 1-877-8-LITTER, or file an electronic complaint via the Litter Hotline page on the TDOT website. Over 1,300 acts of littering were reported throughout 2022. More on the Litter Hotline is mentioned on pages 12-13 of this report.

833-TDOT-FIX: This new initiative was launched in June 2022 and includes various roadway and roadside maintenance requests, from replacing signage to overgrown vegetation. A report of litter along a State Highway can be made through the 833-TDOT-FIX phone number, or a TDOT Maintenance Request online form on the TDOT website. Throughout 2022, nearly 2,000 complaints of litter were made to 833-TDOT-FIX, the second most of any type of maintenance request behind potholes.

	Report an act of littering. Vehicle information required.	Call 1-877-8-LITTER (877-854-8837), or search "Litter Hotline" online at https://www.tn.gov/tdot .
	Report roadside litter. Route information and debris description required.	Call 833-TDOT-FIX (833-836-8349), or search "Maintenance Request Form" online at https://www.tn.gov/tdot .

All Tennesseans Can Prevent Litter

All Tennesseans play a role in litter prevention. Below are some of the ways TDOT offers can make a difference:

Join Adopt-A-Highway: The no-cost volunteer program is an easy way for individuals, families, and groups to help keep roadways and waterways litter-free, while receiving a recognition panel for their efforts. TDOT provides participants with all necessary supplies for their quarterly cleanups. More information about the Adopt-A-Highway program can be found on pages 17-18.

Use the Litter Hotline: The Litter Hotline gives concerned citizens a way to report littering acts they witness. A convenient telephone hotline number and/or online form gathers information about the incident and allows TDOT to notify litter bugs that their act was illegal, and greatly harms our state.

Connect with the Nobody Trashes Tennessee Campaign: The Nobody Trashes Tennessee website at NobodyTrashesTennessee.com offers comprehensive resources for joining the movement to end littering. An event calendar connects individuals and groups to local community cleanups, and helpful content offers tips and resources for individuals, educators, and organizations wanting to get involved. Campaign PSAs, toolkits, and statewide litter research may also be found online. Tennesseans are also encouraged to engage with the campaign through social media channels and to sign-up for a monthly newsletter that contains relevant and timely information for those interested in litter prevention.

Join the Nobody Trashes Tennessee campaign on the following social media platforms:



Nobody Trashes Tennessee



NobodyTrashesTN



@NobodyTrashesTN



Nobody Trashes Tennessee



Figure 2. Keep Roane Litter Free Adopt-A-Highway volunteers conduct a cleanup in Roane County in November 2022.

Cleanup Individually or Join a Nearby Event: The greatest impact Tennesseans can have is by taking action and picking up litter. TDOT highlights many opportunities to volunteer for pick-up events near their homes or with a group through local cleanup organizations. Anyone can visit <https://nobodytrashestennessee.com/events> or use the QR code below to find information about upcoming cleanup events.

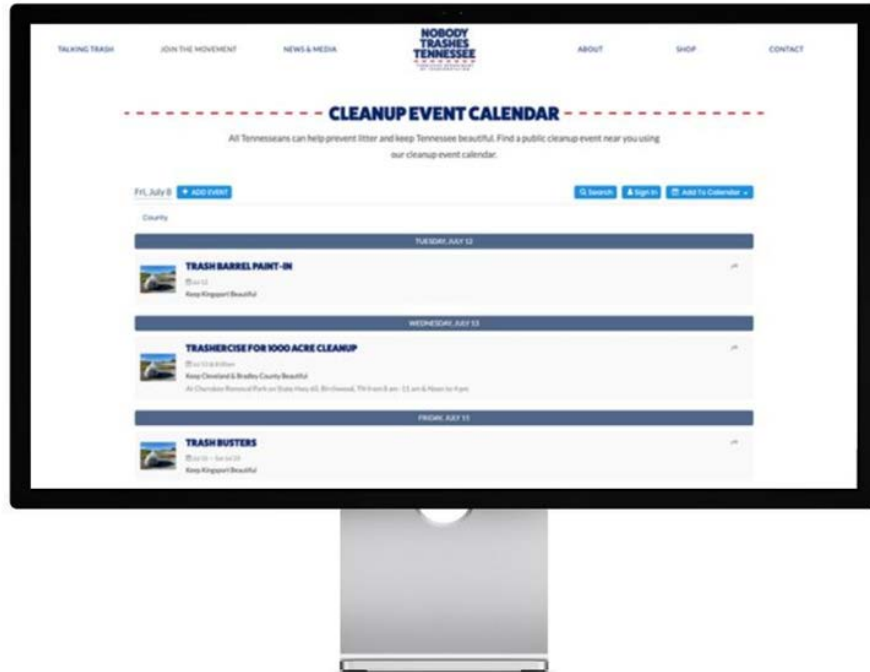


Figure 3 (Above). The new “Events Calendar” of upcoming statewide cleanups on the Nobody Trashes Tennessee website. **Figure 4 (Below).** A QR code for the Events page of the Nobody Trashes Tennessee website.





Figure 5. Student-athletes from Tennessee State University participate in a “No Trash November” cleanup in Davidson County in November 2022.

TAKING ACTION

TDOT Litter Grant

Since 1983, TDOT has joined forces with all 95 county governments by offering Litter Grants which subsidizes local pickup operations and enhance litter prevention education resources across Tennessee. Annually, \$5.5 million is allocated to Litter Grants statewide, a total which has remained the same since 2017. The amount each county receives is based on a formula accounting for population and road miles. The current series of Litter Grant contracts includes \$3,823,915 for local litter pickup operations, and \$1,656,085 for litter prevention education. Litter Grant contracts require that between 20% and 35% of each county's total funding be budgeted for litter prevention education efforts. Counties are required to tackle litter prevention education in three of five designated categories: students, public, media, business, and government. The fact that 79% of the funds in this category were spent in 2022 means that citizens across Tennessee gained valuable knowledge about how litter negatively impacts our quality of life, safety, economic development, and environment.

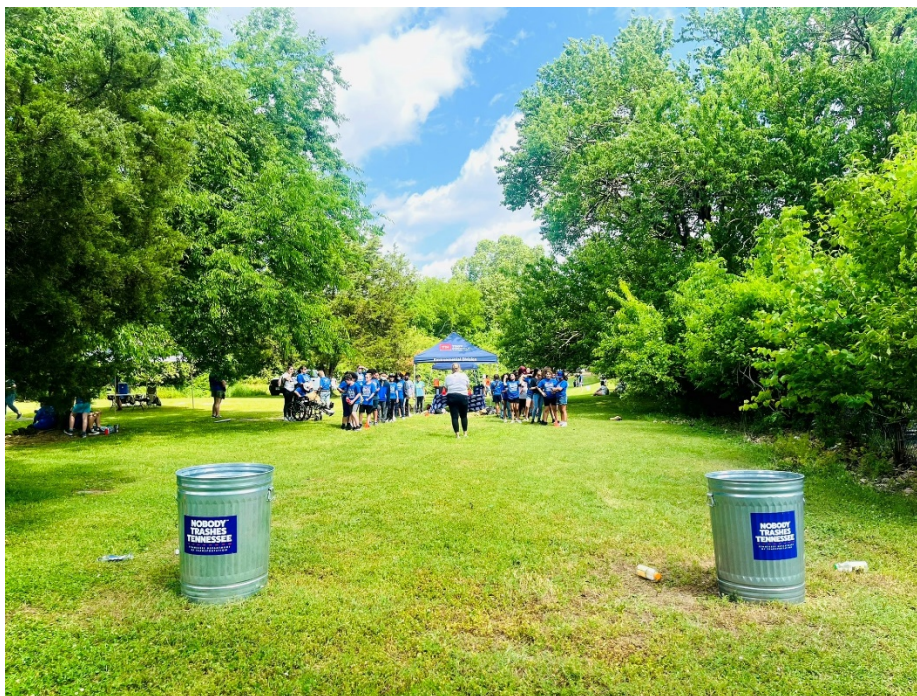


Figure 6. Students participate in a litter sorting educational game during a Rutherford County Water Day in May 2022.

In addition to funding, the positive impact of TDOT's Litter Grants is amplified through local government partners who invest additional resources and the citizens who contribute tens of thousands of volunteer hours to promote these efforts. Litter Grants are extremely efficient, as they save communities and the State of Tennessee millions of dollars. The 2022 statewide average cost of a Litter Grant pickup was just \$14.40 per mile. Contracted litter pickup routinely costs TDOT in excess of \$500 a mile.

The 2022 statewide average cost of a Litter Grant pickup was just \$14.40 per mile.

Litter Grants are a familiar program in most Tennessee communities. Roadside signs with creative litter prevention messaging, students routinely earn volunteer hours through spring cleanup events, and local newspapers frequently run ads for litter art contests.

Describing Litter Grant's impact in Sevier County, Ms. Lisa Bryant, Executive Director of Keep Sevier Beautiful, noted:

"TDOT's Litter Grant has become a central resource for us. It has allowed us to broaden our reach and provide anti-litter programming for students in the Sevier County school system. Last year we reached 14,500 students."

"TDOT's Litter Grant has also allowed us to organize litter events throughout the year on our roadways and riverways, many times teaming up with the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. This grant provides adequate supplies for our safe and fun community events. We currently have an active database of over 1,000 volunteers who assist with these projects throughout the year. Because of the volunteer opportunities we are able to provide through this Grant, Keep Sevier Beautiful has become a staple in Sevier County for student community service hours as well as all others just looking to volunteer."

Litter Grant programs deliver solid, efficient service for Tennessee. Throughout the 39-year history (1983-2022) of TDOT's Litter Grant programs, county governments have removed an average of 11,243 tons of litter each year. This equates to the removal of more than 435,529 tons of litter from Tennessee roadsides and communities. Annualized pounds and tonnage collected is displayed in the References Section, on page 32. Overall, tonnage has been reduced since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 7 (Left). The Morgan County Litter Grant crew sets up a roadside work zone in April 2022.
Figure 8 (Right). The Morgan County Litter Grant crew cleans an illegally dumped box springs and mattress near Oakdale, TN in July 2022.

Despite COVID-related impacts to tonnage collected, several other Litter Grant performance measures have indicated continued success. In 2022, recycled items accounted for 28.9% of the total tonnage collected statewide. This means a large volume of waste was not only picked up but was diverted from landfills and invested into local recycling programs. For the past several years, county governments have increased the cleanup of illegal dumpsites. 3,480 illegal dumpsites were cleaned up in 2022, a decrease of 543 over the previous term. Litter Grantees have trended to pick up more illegal dumpsites annually over the past several recent years.

Litter Hotline

Tennesseans care about preserving the scenic beauty of their communities. TCA § 54-1-401 authorizes TDOT to establish a system for citizens to report acts of littering from motor vehicles.

When citizens notify TDOT of a littering incident, a letter is mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle along with a Nobody Trashes Tennessee car trash bag or portable ashtray and other litter prevention information.

The letter gently reprimands offenders by discouraging litter behavior and informing them that littering is against the law and punishable by a fine.

The entire program is anonymous. Records are not kept regarding individuals who make the report or those receiving a letter. The Citizens Litter Prevention Hotline is an educational tool to



Figure 9. Program logo for the Litter Hotline.

remind those who engage in littering that their actions are hurtful to the state and to their community.

TDOT maintains the toll-free hotline at 1-877-8-LITTER or (877-854-8837), as well as an online form (www.tn.gov/tdot/environmental-home/environmental-highway-beautification-office/litter.html) for residents to report acts of littering. Information necessary to report a littering incident includes:

- License plate number (Tennessee plates only)
- Type and make of the vehicle
- Day and time the incident occurred
- Location where the incident occurred
- Type of item tossed or blown from the vehicle

Keep Tennessee Beautiful

Keep Tennessee Beautiful (KTnB) is an adjunct service of the University of Memphis and provides expertise in litter prevention education, litter law enforcement, community enhancement through beautification, and volunteer recruitment and management. TDOT spends a significant amount of money each year on litter pickup and prevention activities. In order to reduce those costs over time, Tennesseans must recognize the negative impacts on the scenic beauty of Tennessee, and the financial costs associated with litter.

In 2022, \$1,643,982 was awarded to KTnB to serve as the statewide affiliate for Keep America Beautiful (KAB), administer its own programming, and assist local-level KAB affiliates in 34 Tennessee communities. This grant funding allowed KTnB staff to administer a new series of competitive grants to local law enforcement agencies and also support local affiliate initiatives.



Figure 10. Program logo for Keep Tennessee Beautiful.

In 2022, KTnB was awarded \$1,643,982. This allowed for grants to local law enforcement and support of local affiliate initiatives.

The KTnB Advisory Council was established under Governor McWherter’s Executive Order #18 in September 1989. The Council is comprised of 14 citizen appointees and ex-officio members from Tennessee State Departments. Appointed by the Governor, citizen members serve rotating terms and follow their by-laws for the betterment of Tennessee as an attractive, safe and healthy place to live and visit. Through policy advisement, the Council sets direction for KTnB and all local-level affiliates.

Highlights of KTnB Activities during 2022 Include:

- Great American Cleanup Kickoff: In March of 2022, Keep Tennessee Beautiful was able to host the annual Great American Cleanup Kickoff event in Greenville, Tennessee. Governor Bill Lee proclaimed March 2022 as “Keep Tennessee Beautiful Month.” At the event, special recognition and award was given to “Love Where You Live” recipient Danny Benard, former Chester County Solid Waste & West TN Recycling Hub Director. A new award, “Leader Against Litter” was added to the Great American Cleanup Kickoff, and Mayor Barry Hutcherson of Chester County, Tennessee was the very first recipient. The event was another opportunity to continue promoting the ongoing program called “Trashercise Across Tennessee.”



Figure 11. Chester County Solid Waste Director Danny Benard is recognized with the “Love Where You Live Award” in March 2022.

- “Trashercise Across Tennessee” is an opportunity to get fit and give back by collecting trash individually or hosting a small cleanup in a community. Participants were encouraged to log the pounds of trash collected and their volunteer time through a virtual race app. A goal of hosting an event in all 95 counties was set. The success of past local Trashercise events in Leiper’s Fork, Tennessee inspired KTnB to launch the program statewide. KTnB provided trash bags, safety vests, hand sanitizer, gloves, and t-shirts to all volunteering to host Trashercise events in their communities. In 2022, there were 30 Trashercise events held across the state.

- On April 2nd, Keep Tennessee Beautiful partnered with Keep Chester County Beautiful and Chester County Mayor, Barry Hutcherson by giving away mesh tarps for Chester County residents to secure their truckloads.

- Affiliate Retreat: In 2022, Keep Tennessee Beautiful hosted its annual affiliate retreat in Knoxville. Keep Tennessee Beautiful affiliates from across the state gathered as Keep Tennessee Beautiful provided educational sessions, network opportunities, and important updates.



Figure 12. Local affiliates receive program updates during a Keep America Beautiful presentation, as part of the Affiliate Retreat in Knoxville, in October 2022.

- Litter Law Enforcement Grant: In 2022, in cooperation with The Tennessee Department of Transportation Highway Beautification Office and The Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police, Keep Tennessee Beautiful offered a grant to municipal police departments within the state of Tennessee. The goal of the grant is behavior change and public awareness of the statewide litter problem. A focused enforcement of the state litter law sends a clear message to the public that it is an issue of concern. The presence of litter is damaging to road safety, wildlife, property values, the tourism industry, and so much more. The pilot year of the program funded 150 of officer patrol hours targeting litter related crime. In that time, 5 arrests were made, 25 citations were given, and 1,430lbs of litter was collected. The second year of the grant is underway with even more funding and participants, promising even better results.

- In 2022, Keep Tennessee Beautiful was recognized by Keep America Beautiful with 3 awards for State Agency Partnership, awards were for partnerships with TDOT, the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development, and Tennessee State Parks.
- Keep Tennessee Beautiful hosted a month-long sneaker drive during November 2022 in partnership with Sneaker Impact and Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Memphis, to celebrate America Recycles Day. Sneaker Impact placed recycling bins at designated Boys & Girls Club locations in Memphis. For every matching pair of sneakers donated,

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Memphis received a monetary donation from Sneaker Impact.

- Planting: KTnB hosted its 3rd annual “Can You Dig This” beautification project during the 2020 and 2021, with the help of several local affiliates. “Can You Dig This” is a project for beautifying communities by planting native species and flowers, as well as improving recycling efforts by repurposing used tires and turning them into flowerpots. “Can You Dig This” events were held in conjunction with Chester County Library, Chester County Solid Waste & West TN Recycling Hub, and Keep Chester County Beautiful.



Figure 13. The most recent “Can You Dig This” project involved reusing tires for public art displays in Henderson, TN.

- State-Level Affiliates Program: In 2019, KTnB began a pilot program for a new level of affiliation. This was inspired by Governor Lee’s Executive Order #1, to better assist economically distressed counties in Tennessee. The State-Level Affiliate Program is a sister program to becoming a full Keep America Beautiful affiliate through KTnB, with a lesser financial and administrative commitment. This lesser commitment makes affiliation more attractive for localities where funding and staffing can be an obstacle and barrier. In 2022, Keep Tennessee Beautiful added 4 new State-Level Affiliates, solidifying the program beyond the initial pilot program and bringing the total number of counties participating to 6.



Keep Soddy-Daisy
BEAUTIFUL

Figure 14. Program logo for KTnB’s newest affiliate, Keep Soddy Daisy Beautiful.

- In 2022, Keep Tennessee Beautiful also recruited a new full Keep America Beautiful affiliate, Keep Soddy Daisy Beautiful, bringing the total number of Keep America Beautiful affiliates in TN to 34.

Adopt-A-Highway

In addition to partnerships and grants, TDOT administers the Adopt-A-Highway program so that all Tennesseans can do their part in combating litter in their communities. The free, all-volunteer program has been around since 1989, and is an excellent way for individuals, families, or groups of all sizes to give back.



Figure 15 Logo for TDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program.

Adopt-A-Highway is completely free for those who commit to cleaning up a TDOT-approved 2 mile stretch of roadside each quarter. Volunteers must be at least 12 years of age. All volunteers must sign a waiver, at which point they are given plastic bags, caution signs and safety vests by the nearest TDOT district office. Participants in the program are rewarded with a free roadside recognition panel displaying the Adopt-A-Highway volunteers contribute a great deal to TDOT and to their communities.



Figure 16-18. Adopt-A-Highway volunteers pose with their group's roadside recognition panel during cleanups in Shelby, Loudon, and Rutherford counties.

Mr. James McAbee is the District Coordinator for Monroe, Blount, Loudon and Roane counties in east Tennessee. Mr. McAbee explains his enthusiasm for Adopt-A-Highway volunteers by saying:

"I've been the Adopt-A-Highway coordinator for my area sense 2005 and have seen volunteers remove several tons of unsightly litter from our Rights-Of-Way. I have gotten to meet a lot of

volunteers in 18 years. These same folks have gotten to know me, and I them, and all of them have a real passion for keeping our communities clean."

TDOT celebrates one outstanding Adopt-A-Highway group monthly by recognizing them on social media and awarding them with Nobody Trashes Tennessee branded t-shirts. On odd-numbered years, an Adopt-A-Highway group is recognized during the TDOT/KTnB Biennial Conference with an Award of Excellence and a cash prize.

In September 2021, Cumberland County's Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association took home the honor. The Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association diligently filled up hundreds of bags with litter during cleanups throughout the pandemic, and even created a Facebook group page to promote each cleanup event. Association members have found their experience in Adopt-A-Highway as meaningful and rewarding, especially when first time visitors and community residents recognize their hard work. A new group will be recognized in September 2023 at the TDOT/KTnB Biennial Conference in Chattanooga.

Counties in Need of Adopt-A-Highway Volunteers



Figure 19. A graphic used during Summer 2022 public service announcements, recruiting new volunteers in counties who did not have a current Adopt-A-Highway group.

Volunteering with Adopt-A-Highway makes an impact. The program reduces the millions of dollars TDOT spends on litter removal each year, and directly impacts every community. For more information, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/environmental-home/environmental-highway-beautification-office/adopt-a-highway.html>, or contact TDOT's Highway Beautification Office at (615) 741-2877.

Nobody Trashes Tennessee

First launched in June 2017, Nobody Trashes Tennessee is Tennessee’s official statewide litter prevention campaign. Nobody Trashes Tennessee aims to raise awareness of litter behavior and encourage Tennesseans to join the movement against litter. The campaign is rooted in Tennessee-specific litter research conducted in 2016 and updated in October 2022. More on research can be found in the next section of this report.



Figure 20. Program logo for the Nobody Trashes Tennessee litter prevention campaign.

In 2022, the Nobody Trashes Tennessee campaign garnered 275 independent pieces of media coverage from local, statewide, and national outlets, resulting in more than 185 million impressions. The campaign had nearly 57,000 interactions on social media and drove nearly 649,000 visitors to the campaign website. These metrics helped Nobody Trashes Tennessee build brand awareness and public consciousness around litter behavior. The campaign also included the release of a series of message-driven public service announcements entitled “Talking Trash: Season 1”.



Figure 21. Red Cup and friends serve as the main characters in “Talking Trash: Season 1” public service announcements.

Additional 2022 campaign highlights included:

- Assisting Local Cleanups: In March, the campaign partnered with the Sumner County Health Committee for a five-city community cleanup event including the cities of Gallatin, Hendersonville, Portland, Westmoreland, and White House. More than 300 volunteers participated in the roadsides and shorelines cleanup,

- Adopt-A-Highway Campaign: During the summer months, the campaign targeted counties that did not have active Adopt-A-Highway groups through media relations, social media, and paid ads.

- Website Upgrades: Nobody Trashes Tennessee's website was also upgraded to include new capabilities and communications tools. Blog and newsletter features were added to the site and helped keep subscribers informed on everything from how to properly recycle packaging from holiday gifts to the importance of proper disposal of cigarettes.

- Statewide Events Calendar: A new "Events Calendar" page was also added to the website, so that Tennesseans could better learn about upcoming cleanups in their area, and how to volunteer. Registering a cleanup event is completely free through the website and an excellent way to broaden outreach to volunteers.



Figure 22. Editorial asking for Adopt-A-Highway volunteers from Perry County in the July 13th edition of the *Buffalo River Review*.

- No Trash November: In November, the second annual No Trash November initiative removed more than 48,000 pounds of litter from Tennessee roadsides. The month-long initiative removed litter from roadsides during a time of year when outdoor activities and mowing typically wanes. No Trash November kicked off with cleanups at Tennessee State University, AutoZone Park, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Keep Tennessee Beautiful affiliates, dozens of Adopt-A-Highway volunteers, and neighborhood groups across Tennessee followed with their own community cleanups.



Figure 23. An infographic of results from the second annual “No Trash November” mini campaign.

Nobody Trashes Tennessee, as with all of TDOT’s litter prevention programming, is serviced by a statewide network of local partners, grantees, and volunteers, who amplify the campaign’s efforts and reach. The campaign would not be a success without these continuing relationships.



Figure 24-25. Volunteers in Carter County (left) and Knoxville (right) participated in “No Trash November” cleanup events.



Figure 26. A research field team inventories litter found at a roadside survey location in Davidson County, in October 2022.

Program Priorities

Preserving Water Quality

Litter travels. Objects originating inside a vehicle and littered along a roadside, are easily blown by wind, or moved by a rain event from a ditch into a local waterway. This degrades water quality, impacts wildlife, and harms those using the waterways for commerce or recreation. Keep America Beautiful released a national litter study in April 2021 which measured a decrease in roadside litter, but an increase in litter in waterways. Nationally, the Keep America Beautiful study showed 26 billion pieces of litter exist in waterways across the country.

26 billion pieces of litter exist in waterways across the country.

To combat this trend, TDOT has partnered with Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful to sustain funding and help implement three distinct initiatives. First, TDOT has provided funding to sustain the group's Adopt-A-River Mile program and a series of cleanups in conjunction with Living Lands & Waters along the Tennessee portion of the Tennessee River and its tributaries. Second, as part of Earth Day events in April 2022, 30 TDOT staff from Region 2 volunteered with Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful to conduct a shoreline cleanup of Chickamauga Lake, in Hamilton County.

The third initiative was announced in March 2022 and is an innovative use of technology to reduce litter found in waterways. TDOT provided a \$180,000 grant for the purchase of a network of Seabin trash skimming devices, to be deployed at marina's and in public lands, such as State Parks, boat launches, and boat ramps. Each device has the ability to remove 3,000 pounds of marine debris



Figure 27. TDOT Region 2 staff receive a safety briefing as part of a volunteer, water-based cleanup on Chickamauga Lake in April 2022.

each year, and will also filter out gasoline, oils and microplastics from the water.

“Until now, all of our work has only been able to *prevent* microplastics in our waterways, so we are thrilled to be making an effort to actually mitigate microplastics out of the water,” said Kathleen Gibi, Executive Director for Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful. “We’re grateful to TDOT for these—as I see it—revolutionary grants and to our partners who will be maintaining the *Seabins* to make this trailblazing project possible.”



Figure 28-29. In announcing a new regional network of Seabin trash skimming devices, a public demonstration was made at the Chattanooga waterfront in March 2022.

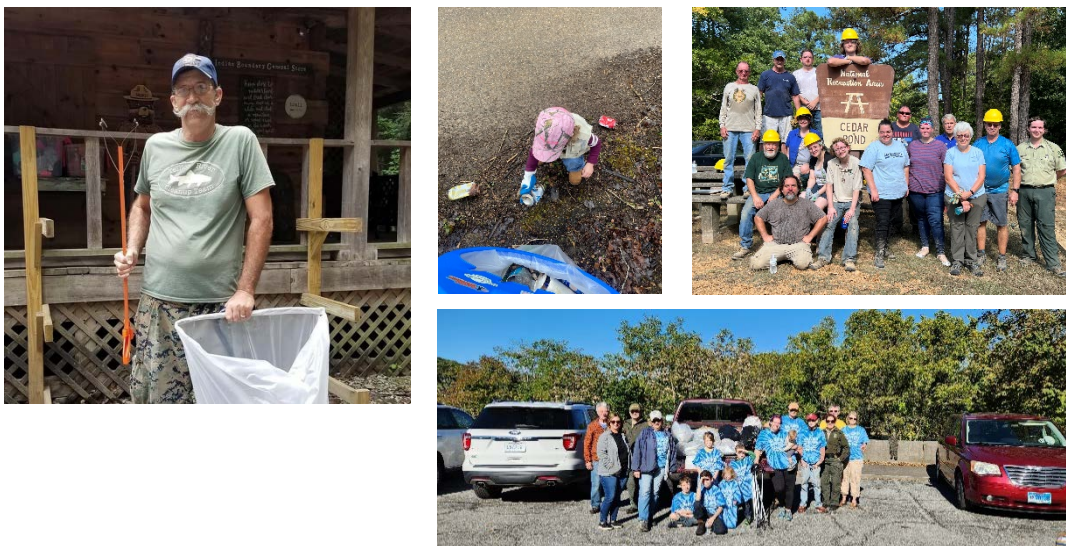
Fostering Scenic Partnerships

The most scenic locations in Tennessee (Tennessee State Parks, National Forests, or even local waterways) are very often located along a designated scenic roadway. These treasured places and treasured drives of Tennessee are meant to be unique experiences for visitors, and free from the ugliness of litter. In September 2022, to better connect the importance of litter prevention to Tennessee’s scenic roadways, TDOT launched a new program entitled “Love Tennessee Byways”. In conjunction with National Public Lands Day, TDOT challenged each byway management organization of the state’s collection of 13 Scenic Byways to complete a volunteer litter cleanup and subsequently earn funds to be used toward a beautification activity of their choice. Both the cleanup and the beautification activity must have been conducted

along their byway route, and other program parameters were also set. Below is a list of participating byways, and a description of their beautification projects.

Cherochala Skyway National Scenic Byway	Monroe County Tourism	Volunteer litter cleanup and painting/small exterior improvements to the Cherochala Skyway Visitor’s Center.
East Tennessee Crossing National Scenic Byway	9 Lakes of East Tennessee Tourism Association	Volunteer litter cleanup and install of interpretive kiosks.
Norris Freeway National Scenic Byway	Adventure Anderson & Town of Norris, TN	Volunteer litter cleanup and installation of buffer trees near a solid waste convenience center.
Tennessee River Trail	Humphreys & Houston County Governments	Volunteer litter cleanups and installation of tourism directional signage.
Woodlands Trace National Scenic Byway	USDA Forest Service	Volunteer litter cleanup and Cedar Pond picnic area improvements.

Figure 30 (Above). A chart listing 2022 Love Tennessee Byways projects undertaken by participating Scenic Byways. **Figure 31 (Below).** A collection of pictures (Left to Right) from volunteer cleanups along the Cherochala Skyway, Norris Freeway National Scenic Byway and Woodlands Trace National Scenic Byways.



Updating Tennessee-Specific Research

TDOT's litter prevention programming, namely the messaging that constitutes the Nobody Trashes Tennessee campaign, is rooted in Tennessee-specific litter research. Beginning in July 2022, TDOT began to coordinate with Keep Tennessee Beautiful and various program partners in preparation for updating the department's generation of litter research products. These updated research products included conducting a new Litter Attitudes and Behaviors Focus Group, drafting an updated TDOT Litter Costs Memo, and hiring a research team to lead a Visible Litter Study of the actual litter on Tennessee's roadsides. The figure below provides a brief description of these research products.

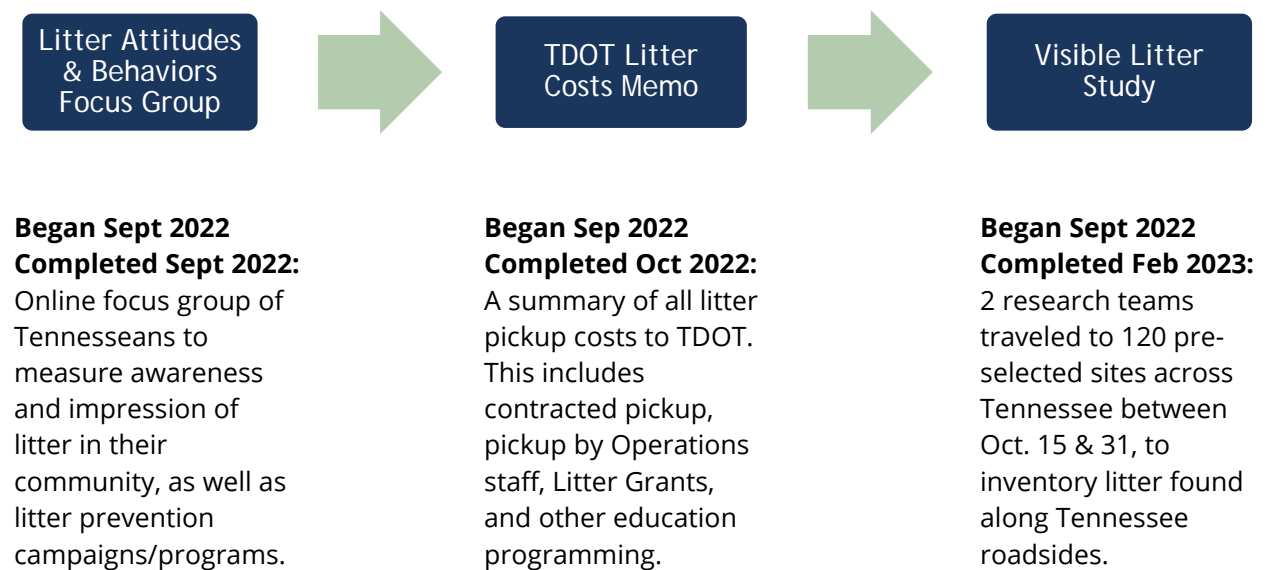


Figure 32. A progression of how Tennessee-specific litter research was updated in Fall and Winter 2022.

Full, detailed results of these research products have just been released at the time of publication. All of the full reports will be published to the "Research" page of the Nobody Trashes Tennessee website in the coming weeks. Additionally, a full synthesis of the research products will be included in the 2024 edition of this report. Some big picture trends emerging from the research includes:

- Tennesseans recognizing TDOT's litter prevention programming, think littering is a very serious problem. The most recent Litter Attitudes and Behaviors Focus Group continues to show more awareness of Adopt-A-Highway, Keep Tennessee Beautiful, and Nobody Trashes Tennessee. 56% of respondents think litter is a very serious problem for

waterways, and react negatively when told that TDOT spends \$22.3 million annually to pickup litter and educate the public.

- Litter is a more expensive problem than ever. TDOT now spends \$23.2 million picking up litter and educating the public, up \$4.3 million (23%) from July 2020.
- Less litter exists on Tennessee roadsides. The October 2022 Visible Litter Study found that 88 million pieces of litter exist on Tennessee roadsides at any given time, down from 100 million in June 2016.

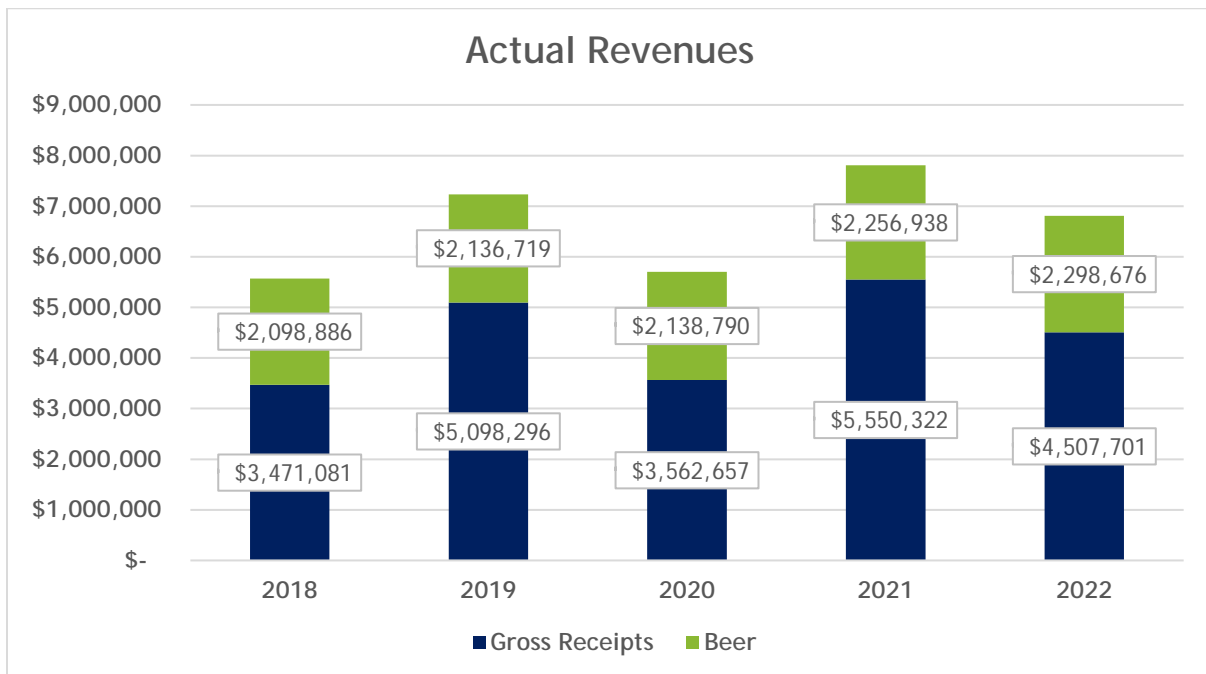


Figure 33. A county highway near Etowah, TN is adopted through Keep McMinn Beautiful's "Road Side Pride" program.

References

Program Revenues

In 1981, the Soft Drink and Malt Beverage Industries took a comprehensive, proactive approach to prevent their bottles and other trash from becoming litter along Tennessee roadways. As good corporate citizens, the industry lobbied to establish a tax on their products to help fund litter prevention throughout Tennessee. The tax revenues, from the gross receipts of soft drink sales and the production of a barrel of beer are codified in TCA § 67-4-402 and TCA § 57-5-201 respectively and have provided TDOT with a dependable revenue source which has steadily grown over time. For Fiscal Year 2021-2022, TDOT received a total of \$6,806,377.59, which is broken down in the table below.

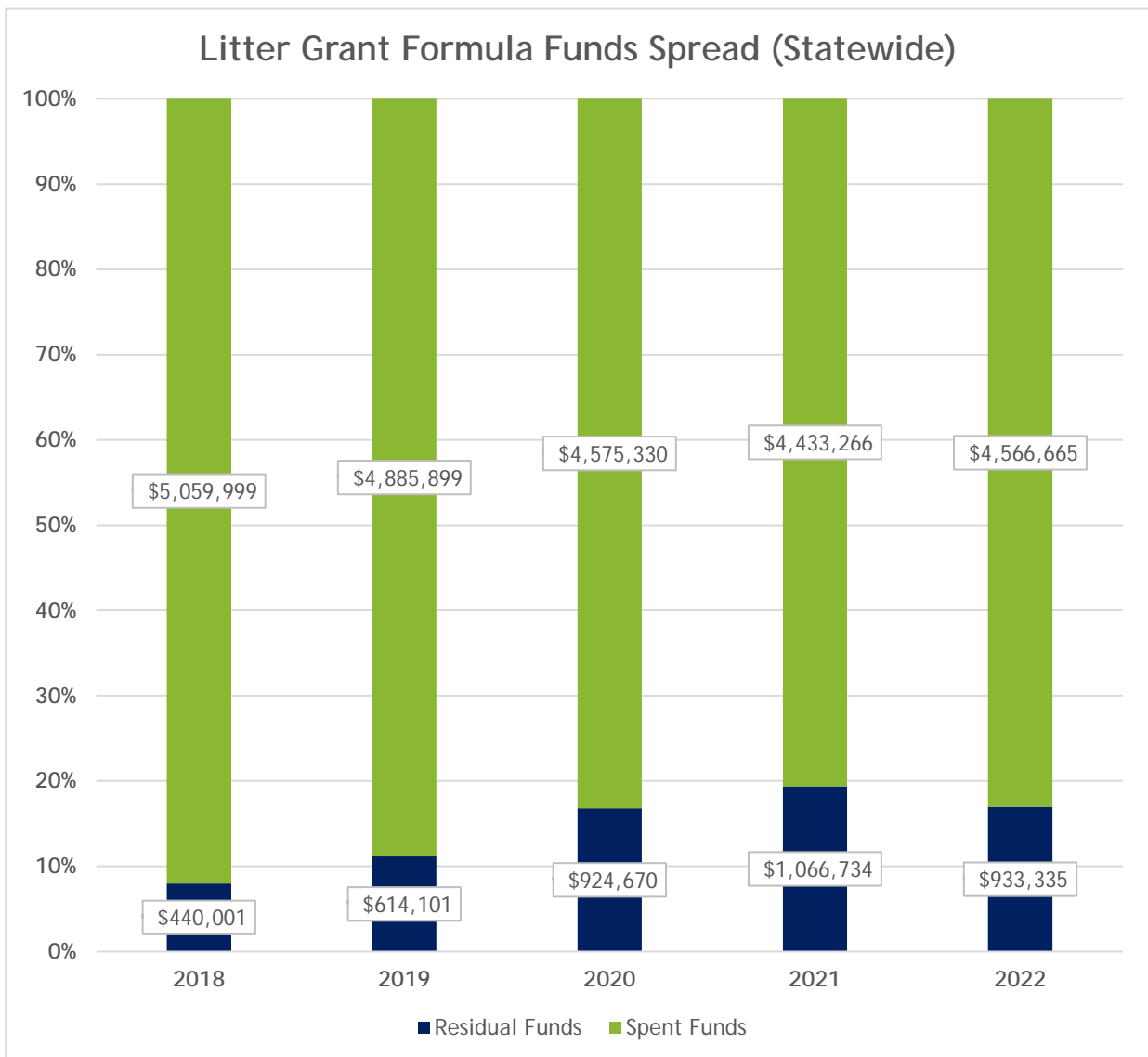


Revenues that come to TDOT are dedicated for the specific purpose of litter prevention, abatement, and education. Unspent revenues are returned to a fund separate from the Highway Trust Fund and used to fund projects such as the Nobody Trashed Tennessee campaign and Special Litter Grants, which are offered every few years. Special Litter Grants were last issued in 2017. The laws also allow TDOT discretion on how to best use the revenues to clean up and prevent litter, and matters related to litter. In recent years, this has meant

expanded support for waterway cleanups and support for local recycling programs. Over time, additional programs have been added (Keep Tennessee Beautiful, Litter Hotline, Nobody Trashes Tennessee, Adopt-A-Highway) which have all been supported by these revenues.

Litter Grant Spending

Each year there are some counties participating in the Litter Grant Program that do not spend their full formula allocation. The chart below shows the amounts spent and left as residual funds on litter grant contracts over the past five fiscal years. Since Litter Grant funding is designated, these residual funds are collected and utilized on special litter projects. As a note, residual fund increases in 2020 and 2021 were due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



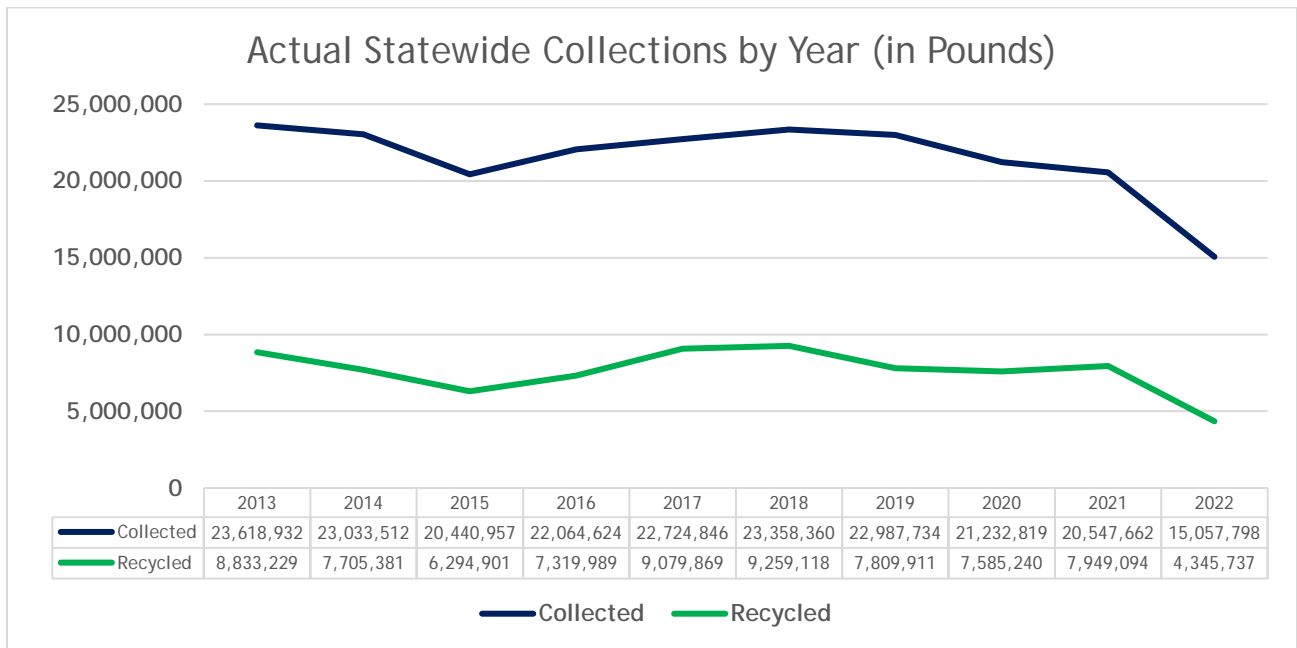
Litter Grant Funding Distribution by County

For the Fiscal Year 2022-2023, below is a list of total funds granted to Tennessee county governments for litter pickup, abatement, and prevention education.

Anderson	\$ 52,100	Hamilton	\$ 127,500	Morgan	\$ 44,200
Bedford	\$ 51,900	Hancock	\$ 44,200	Obion	\$ 48,800
Benton	\$ 44,200	Hardeman	\$ 45,700	Overton	\$ 44,600
Bledsoe	\$ 44,200	Hardin	\$ 48,200	Perry	\$ 44,200
Blount	\$ 74,000	Hawkins	\$ 55,500	Pickett	\$ 44,200
Bradley	\$ 65,300	Haywood	\$ 44,200	Polk	\$ 44,200
Campbell	\$ 47,700	Henderson	\$ 48,800	Putnam	\$ 59,300
Cannon	\$ 44,200	Henry	\$ 51,400	Rhea	\$ 44,200
Carroll	\$ 48,800	Hickman	\$ 48,900	Roane	\$ 51,800
Carter	\$ 49,700	Houston	\$ 44,200	Robertson	\$ 56,600
Cheatham	\$ 44,200	Humphreys	\$ 44,200	Rutherford	\$ 124,100
Chester	\$ 44,200	Jackson	\$ 44,200	Scott	\$ 44,200
Claiborne	\$ 48,500	Jefferson	\$ 52,700	Sequatchie	\$ 44,200
Clay	\$ 44,200	Johnson	\$ 44,200	Sevier	\$ 69,600
Cocke	\$ 48,800	Knox	\$ 171,400	Shelby	\$ 251,200
Coffee	\$ 52,600	Lake	\$ 44,200	Smith	\$ 44,200
Crockett	\$ 44,200	Lauderdale	\$ 44,200	Stewart	\$ 44,200
Cumberland	\$ 63,000	Lawrence	\$ 58,500	Sullivan	\$ 81,300
Davidson	\$ 188,600	Lewis	\$ 44,200	Sumner	\$ 87,800
Decatur	\$ 44,200	Lincoln	\$ 52,100	Tipton	\$ 52,200
DeKalb	\$ 44,200	Loudon	\$ 49,200	Trousdale	\$ 44,200
Dickson	\$ 54,400	Macon	\$ 44,200	Unicoi	\$ 44,200
Dyer	\$ 47,300	Madison	\$ 63,200	Union	\$ 44,200
Fayette	\$ 51,600	Marion	\$ 44,200	Van Buren	\$ 44,200
Fentress	\$ 44,200	Marshall	\$ 45,100	Warren	\$ 49,900
Franklin	\$ 50,300	Maury	\$ 67,600	Washington	\$ 72,100
Gibson	\$ 57,500	McMinn	\$ 55,100	Wayne	\$ 45,500
Giles	\$ 52,200	McNairy	\$ 47,400	Weakley	\$ 52,800
Grainger	\$ 44,200	Meigs	\$ 44,200	White	\$ 44,200
Greene	\$ 67,400	Monroe	\$ 53,200	Williamson	\$ 98,400
Grundy	\$ 44,200	Montgomery	\$ 91,300	Wilson	\$ 78,000
Hamblen	\$ 47,700	Moore	\$ 44,200	Statewide	\$ 5,500,000

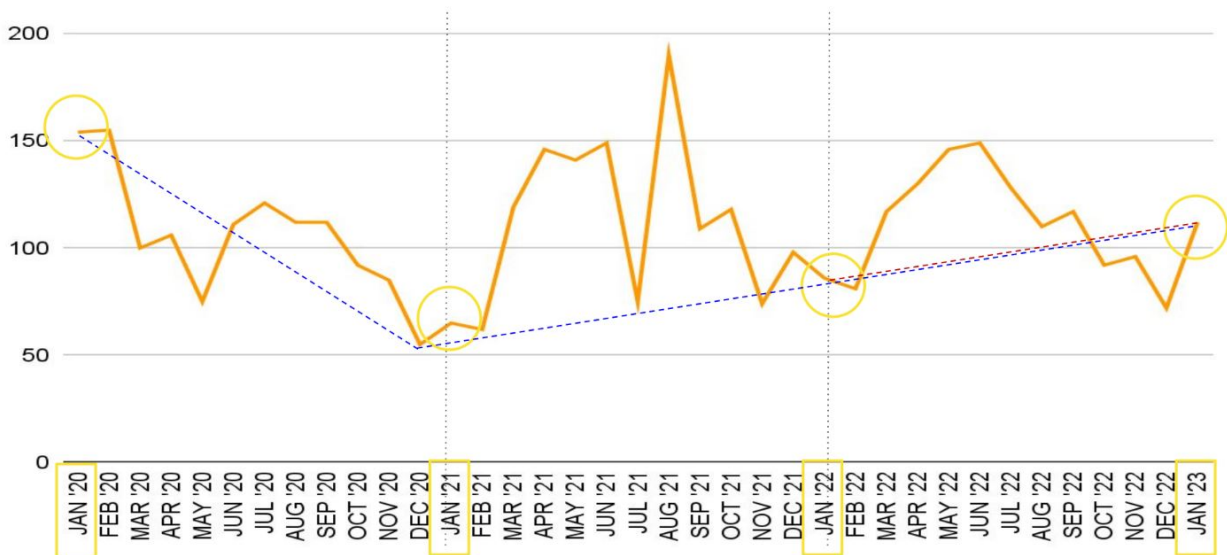
Litter Grant Tonnage

The chart below reflects the total amount of statewide litter collected, and recycled, as part of the TDOT Litter Grant Program over the past ten fiscal years. Please note that TDOT increased spending by \$2.67 million on contracted litter pickup for Interstates and select State Highways in 2022.



Litter Hotline Reports

The chart below reflects the total amount of Litter Hotline reports, by month, between January 2020 and January 2023.



Nobody Trashes Tennessee Campaign Performance

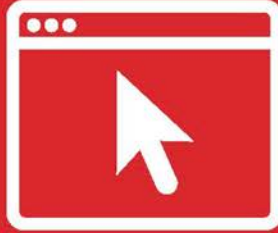


FY-2022 CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE



PROGRAM SUCCESS

BRAND AWARENESS increased by 600%	AIDED BRAND AWARENESS increased by 46%	ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY groups increased by 20%
LITTER HOTLINE REPORTS increase 8%	20 ONSITE ACTIVATIONS	NEWSLETTER SIGN-UPS 30% INCREASE



PAID MEDIA

42,611,504
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

11.4 MILLION
BONUS IMPRESSIONS




WEBSITE

649k
total website actions

35%
increase in organic traffic

16%
increase in keyword rankings



SOCIAL MEDIA


Combined Channel Audience grew by **5%**

Combined Social Engagement grew by **445%**

Message Volume increased by **106%**

MORE THAN **175** INDIVIDUALS USED #NobodyTrashesTennessee

VERIFIED on Facebook & Instagram



MEDIA RELATIONS

275
pieces of coverage

2.7 MILLION
estimated views

5 PRSA
Nashville Parthenon Awards

Contact Information

TDOT Highway Beautification Office Staff

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Susan Stokes	Financial Coordinator	(615) 770-3902	Susan.Stokes@tn.gov

TDOT Litter Outreach Programs

TDOT Maintenance Request	(833) TDOT-FIX or (833) 836-8349
Litter Hotline	(1-877)-8-LITTER or (1-877) 854-8837
Nobody Trashes Tennessee	(615) 741-2877
Adopt-A-Highway	(615) 253-1977

Keep Tennessee Beautiful Staff

Missy Marshall	Executive Director	(901) 678-4159	Mmrshl1@memphis.edu
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**NOBODY TRASHES
TENNESSEE**SM

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TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Tennessee Department of Transportation

Highway Beautification Office

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Litter Hotline: 1-877-8-LITTER

<https://www.tn.gov/tdot/environmental-home/environmental-highway-beautification-office/beautification-litter-grant.html>