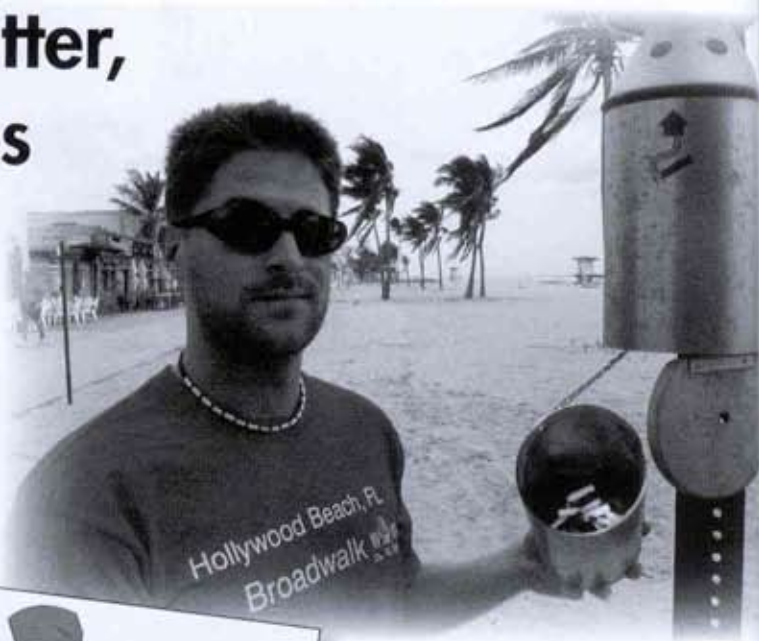


When It Comes to Litter, Several Communities Hoping to Butt Out

by Mandy Rogers



Thousands of pieces of cellulose acetate litter – cigarette butts – usually can be found on sidewalks, roadways and beaches in most communities.

Cellulose acetate, a manmade fiber that looks like cotton thread, takes many years to decompose and, along with other cigarette litter such as packaging and lighting materials, represents more than 20 percent of the litter collected in many community clean-up initiatives.

To address the mounting nationwide problem of cigarette litter, Keep America Beautiful, a nonprofit community improvement organization, has unveiled its “Guide to Cigarette Litter Prevention.”

The guide provides tips and ideas about how communities can reduce cigarette litter.

In turn, several municipalities in Florida are putting the guide’s ideas into motion.

Broward Beautiful, in partnership with the county’s Adopt-A-Street Program and the City of Hollywood, is participating in Keep America Beautiful’s Cigarette Litter Prevention Pilot Program.

“This pilot will attempt to decrease the level of cigarette-butt litter along the Hollywood Beach Broadwalk from Johnson Street to Connecticut Street and increase the public’s awareness of beach litter,” said Clara Hill of Broward County’s Waste and Recycling Services.

The study will involve collecting and assessing data that will assist in implementing an efficient program that will decrease the level of cigarette-butt litter in the proposed pilot area.

“Our beaches are vital to the tourist industry of Florida, and no one wants to come to visit a dirty beach,” Hill said.

“With new regulations pushing smokers outside of restaurants all along our Broadwalk area, we were finding more and more cigarette butts. These butts end up in the sand and then in the water.”



Adopt-A-Street’s mission is to change behaviors, and help stop the littering on beaches.

“We began the pilot in hopes that it would be successful and eventually expand the program to the entire Broward County beachfront,” Hill said. “Our message is simple: If you smoke, don’t litter. No butts on the beach!”

The City of Orlando’s Keep Orlando Beautiful program is aiming to eliminate cigarette-butt waste by placing cigarette receptacles around the city. Keep Orlando Beautiful will gauge people’s use of the receptacles, and eventually will launch a cigarette litter prevention campaign.

Keep Sarasota County Beautiful also is participating in the pilot program, and will place 10 receptacles in the Village of Siesta Key, which is part of the City of Sarasota.

Sandra Washington, program manager of Keep Sarasota County Beautiful, said that the organization is also working diligently to put together an anti-litter cigarette-butt campaign.

“We want to make people in our cities more aware that cigarette butts are not only litter, but are very harmful,” Washington says.

For more information about cigarette litter prevention, or to order the “Guide to Cigarette Litter Prevention,” please visit the Keep America Beautiful Web site at www.kab.org/programs2.asp?id=728 or call (203) 323-8987.

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