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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Washington County Contractor Guilty of Illegally Dumping**

**Canonsburg, PA – (May 22, 2014)** – Robert Semulka (9/9/1967) from Washington, PA plead guilty and was fined \$2101.50 for illegally dumping trash at two locations in Canton Township. A third incident of dumping by Semulka, also in Canton Township, is awaiting an outcome. Evidence was found by Canton Township Code Enforcement Officer, Chris Hammett who traced it back to Semulka, a local contractor.

Although illegally dumping trash anywhere is wrong, the dumping at one site along Edgewood Avenue in Canton Township is even more of an outrage since the Washington County Court System Furlough Into Service Program in partnership with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has spent numerous hours bagging trash and slinging tires in preparation for proper disposal. So far, the crew has removed 83 tires and an estimated 20 tons of trash from this site alone.

“We are taking an aggressive approach to illegal dumping in Canton Township as this is not only detrimental to the environment but also incurs costs to the Township for time and resources,” states Code Enforcement Officer, Chris Hammett. “We have been very pleased working with the Washington County Court System Furlough Into Service Program in partnership with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, they have done a fantastic job cleaning these areas and we plan to continue to work with them and hopefully together we can eliminate a lot of illegal dumping. If more incidents do occur we will prosecute any and all individuals involved to the fullest extent of the law,”

“Unfortunately, unscrupulous contractors are out there and as citizens we need to do our homework before deciding who to hire for home improvement projects,” states Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “It’s our right to ask contractors how they dispose of their construction and demolition materials once they have finished a job and ask for documentation of proper disposal.”

In 2008, the Pennsylvania Legislature passed the Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act. The law requires that all contractors who perform at least \$5,000 worth of home improvements per year register with the Attorney General's Office. As of July 1, 2009, consumers in Pennsylvania are able to verify registration with the Attorney General's office by visiting [www.attorneygeneral.gov](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov), Registered Contractors page, or by calling the toll-free hotline at 1-888-520-6680.

Through a partnership initiated in 2011, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, the Washington County Court System (WCCS) Furlough Into Service (FITS) Program, local officials, and law enforcement continue to remove illegal dumpsites in Washington County and enforce local laws relating to illegal dumping of waste. To date, the partnership has removed 261,000 pounds of trash and 3,200 tires. As a means of deterring illegal dumping, signs and high-tech cameras are being erected at previously cleaned sites as well as random sites throughout the County. The high-tech cameras are capable of capturing license plate numbers and vehicle descriptions in day or night. All evidence gathered from these cameras will be used to prosecute individuals to the fullest extent of the law. The cameras are being rotated throughout the County.

Questions regarding proper disposal of waste and recycling in Washington County can be answered by Jason Theakston, Recycling Coordinator, Washington County Planning Commission, at 724-228-6811, or by e-mail: [theakstj@co.washington.pa.us](mailto:theakstj@co.washington.pa.us).

**About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful**

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to make our communities clean and beautiful. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its volunteers have removed over 105 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania's roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit [www.keppabeautiful.org](http://www.keppabeautiful.org).