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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Surveillance Cameras Catch Dumpers in Wesleyville Borough, Erie County

(December 2, 2015) – For years, residents of Wesleyville Borough and residents of nearby communities have used the Borough’s recycling center to leave old furniture, mattresses, tires, computers, even paint and hazardous chemicals. In 2013, the Borough researched the purchase of security cameras, but the Borough Council felt the cameras were too expensive - so the Borough resigned itself to clean up piles of debris at the center each Monday morning.

This has begun to change. Since June 19th, Wesleyville Borough has been able to monitor its self-serve recycling center for illegal dumping thanks to Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its generous loan of three high-quality motion activated surveillance cameras that provide instant wireless transmission of site activity, photo documentation of license plates and clear photos of activity day or night. Even though the cameras are in plain sight and large signs caution would be dumpers of the penalties of leaving non-recyclables behind, Borough officials were surprised to see a complete disregard for recycling center rules and nearly always in broad daylight.

The Borough reviewed images from the surveillance cameras a week after installation and quickly compiled dozens of photographs of people leaving tires, televisions, furniture, and other non-recyclable materials. The Borough worked with the local Police Department to run license plates of the offenders and quickly filed summary charges against the dumpers. Many responded by admitting guilt and paying fines ranging from \$50 to \$200. The Borough also caught people stealing recyclable materials, road salt, and asphalt.

All cases were heard by the Honorable Mark E. Krahe. Those found guilty and fined are: John Michael Needham (5/29/74), Richard J. Knauer (8/16/50), Mark A. Burdick (5/31/68), Linda Goard (8/16/52), Patricia Laniewicz (1/13/75), Justo Maldonado (11/7/55), Rebecca Miller (3/2/69), Darrin Lee King (3/11/72), Mary Beth Wells (8/28/63), Harry C. Adams (1/17/48), Roger Hackett (9/8/56), Michael Justin Schley (10/11/71), Jessica Hull (4/3/90), David Szymecki (DOB-Not Available), Branden L. Bull (11/27/85), Mark E. Cadden (12/16/60), Douglas A. McMillen (6/12/60), Kurt Shafer (4/27/58).

The amount and frequency of illegal dumping has dramatically decreased as word spread throughout the Borough. Some officials felt that dumping would occur elsewhere in the Borough if the Recycling Center was no longer an option. This has not happened. Instead, an increasing number of Borough residents have paid nominal fees to the Borough for pick up and proper disposal of furniture and televisions.

Fines have been used by the Borough to dispose of television sets and computer monitors as well as a truckload of tires.

“While the process to investigate the crimes and bring charges involves borough staff and police department time and can be several weeks before charges are filed, the enforcement effort has been worth the investment,” said Tom Maggio, Wesleyville Borough Manager.

“We are excited to see the Illegal Dump Free PA Program working as it was intended to work. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful supplies high tech surveillance cameras and support to municipalities and local

organizations to help identify illegal dumpers,” said Shannon Reiter, President, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “It is the local commitment, dedication, and strong enforcement partnerships that bring it full-circle, as it has in Wesleyville Borough.”

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s Illegal Dump Free PA , launched this year, provides communities with the tools and resources they need to fight illegal dumping through a public education initiative, surveillance camera loan program and grants for deterrents. The program is gaining traction and has been instrumental in providing information needed for convictions across the state. Visit www.illegaldumpfreepa.org for community resources to fight illegal dumping.

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 113 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania’s roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keppabeautiful.org.

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