



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

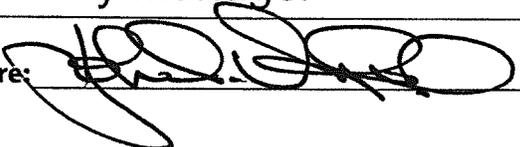
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Henrico County  
Program Title: Social Media Video Education  
Program Category: Environmental

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John A. Vithoukas  
Title: County Manager  
Signature: 

## **1. Short Overview of the Program**

In 2015, the Executive Coordinator of Keep Henrico Beautiful (KHB) developed a social media initiative of creating short video segments to help educate a brand new audience about recycling and the KHB program in general. Clips are developed to be shared on several social media outlets in order to educate the residents of Henrico County on varying environmental topics. The purpose of the videos is to target a brand new audience through a way previously unused by KHB.

The initial social media video education series was Recycling RoundUp and reached over 96,000 social media subscribers during a 28 week period. With the overwhelming response and popularity that this initiative brought to life, more social media series have been planned for 2016 for our public schools, volunteers, and arts and crafts activities at summer camps.

## **2. Problem/Challenge/Situation**

Keep Henrico Beautiful is a program under the Henrico County Department of Public Utilities comprised of a volunteer citizen advisory committee and a full-time County employee who serves as Executive Coordinator. The KHB program is the County's initiative to prevent litter, promote recycling, and supply related environmental education to residents of all ages. Over the last couple of years, KHB focused on growing their social media base, and reached a place where an educational campaign would be effective. With most of the educational initiatives being focused on school-aged children, adults became lost in the shuffle. While it is important to educate youth, reinforcing the lesson of environmental stewardship through adulthood is imperative. With the growing success of social media outlets, a perfect platform was created for education to occur.

### **3. How the Program Was Carried Out**

One of the main purposes of KHB is to educate residents on litter, recycling, and beautification. The focus has always been to primarily work on programs for youth and school-aged children. The only adult education programs that existed were civic presentations that occurred by request of the groups. In recent years, the number of requests from these organizations began to dwindle. The Executive Coordinator brain stormed ways to help boost adult education.

Concurrently, the Executive Coordinator worked for two years to build a strong network of followers through Social Media outlets. Keep Henrico Beautiful has pages on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest. With the ever-growing popularity of social media, an idea began to take root on how to utilize this platform for Henrico-specific environmental education.

In looking around for similar programs in the central Virginia area, the Executive Coordinator found nothing to build on or replicate. Knowing that she would be creating something new to the local region, she began to look back onto popular posts from KHB in the past for inspiration. The most popular post was a short video titled the Trash Bucket Challenge. This was a challenge started by colleagues in Hawaii that played off of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge that took social media by storm. The Executive Coordinator brought the Trash Bucket Challenge to central Virginia and had great success in garnering excitement for the challenge and KHB. While that video was great for marketing, there was no tangible education to be gleaned from the content. The Executive Coordinator thought it would be a good avenue to explore to utilize videos on social media for educational purposes for the adult residents of Henrico. Thus, the grassroots effort of developing a video series was born.

To begin, the Executive Coordinator developed a format to go on. It was decided that the videos would be kept between 30 seconds and 2 minutes depending on the amount of information that was being shared. The point was to make sure to not overwhelm the audience with too much information, but to leave them with a message that would be meaningful and relevant. It was also decided that to keep it personal, the Executive Coordinator would actually be in the videos instead of solely narrating. This is to help make the videos more relatable.

The original video educational initiative was a series titled the Recycling RoundUp. This was a 28 week video series that hit on different topics each week. It began in conjunction with the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA) because they needed assistance getting the word out about recycling specifics. (Note: CVWMA is the local contractor that handles recycling for 13 surrounding localities including Henrico). Utilizing a video outlet seemed like a quick and inexpensive way to target a large audience. Little did we know exactly how popular it would become and the Recycling RoundUp would almost take on a life of its own.

The very first Recycling RoundUp video was shared on April 1, 2015 to help kick off Keep Henrico Beautiful month. From there on out, videos were shared on Mondays to utilize the alliteration of Movie Mondays and to establish a routine for followers to look for the information. On Instagram and Twitter, the hashtags "RecyclingRoundUp" and "HenricoBeautiful" were used to help other followers search for the information if they happened to miss the original posting. On Facebook, a separate video album was created so that folks would be able to have a quick reference guide to find the videos. While the Executive Coordinator has not put a lot of focus into garnering followers on YouTube, that site was used as a tool to create the links for the videos, though some tags were used within that site as well.

For the first seven videos, the focus was solely on recycling. Specifically, how to obtain recycling bins, where to recycle, and common items accepted were discussed. After that, KHB

went on their own and shifted the focus to include other environmental education to the mix including reducing, reusing, volunteer opportunities, and teacher support materials, just to name a few. To keep it interesting, topics were varied from week to week, and there was a different back-drop to showcase each or several of the five magisterial districts in Henrico.

The Recycling RoundUp program ran for 28 consecutive weeks on the following sites: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. The videos were extremely well received and people thoroughly enjoyed looking out for them each week. Each segment ends the same way: Thank you for keeping Henrico beautiful, have a great day! The reason the Recycling RoundUp went on hiatus is that the Executive Coordinator went out on maternity leave. Now that she is back, she is gearing up for another social media video series.

Through social media outlets, the Executive Coordinator was able to track the number of folks that were engaged in the videos. Engagement in the post includes how many people the post reaches (how many watch the video in their feed without opening it in a separate window), the number of times watched (number opened in a separate window), plus the number of “likes,” “shares,” “comments,” “favorites,” and “retweets.” In analyzing these numbers, the most popular topics were able to be determined. These popular topics will be the focus of future video education on social media—teacher resources, volunteer opportunities, and recycled arts and crafts activities with a tie-in to our Pinterest page.

Going forward, KHB will be creating several video initiatives. To begin, we will be sharing different teacher resources at their appropriate time of year. For instance, KHB creates different programs that align with the Virginia Standards of Learning. By utilizing videos on social media, we will be able to share a quick segmented video on our page to advertise programs. We will be able to take our school-aged programs to schools that we may previously not have a contact. These videos will be done on a periodic basis when there are programs appropriate to share.

Secondly, we will keep our followers abreast of volunteer opportunities. Putting this in video form will be helpful so that the potential volunteers may be able to visualize the area that they will be cleaning. The hope is that we will be able to have more volunteers and therefore have less litter. With less litter on the ground, we will be eliminating negative externalities and in theory reducing the amount that people litter. These videos will take place leading up to clean-up events, and when we have a specific need to fulfill.

Lastly, we will be doing an arts-and-crafts series. As opposed to just talking about the process as we did in the Recycling RoundUp, we are hoping to record and show step-by-step instructions for the crafts. This video series will take place this coming summer in conjunction with summer camps. The hope is that recycling education will trickle down to the campers that may execute these craft activities.

All in all, social media video education has been a tremendous success thus far, and we look forward to our new and upcoming videos. The trick to social media is that it is ever-changing and evolving at a rapid pace, so we are looking forward to utilizing this outlet for innovative education.

#### **4. Financing and Staffing**

This program is designed to be a zero cost way to educate Henrico County citizens. The only cost associated with making videos is to pay the Executive Coordinator's salary for regular hours worked. Aside from the Executive Coordinator, one extra Henrico County staff member was asked during regular work hours to help video tape the segment.

To create the videos, the Executive Coordinator's cell phone is used. From there, the video file is emailed to be posted on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. A screen shot from the video is

taken so that it may be posted on Instagram. Since the videos are so short, no video editing is utilized. If an error is made, the Executive Coordinator reshoots the segment.

## **5. Program Results**

Social media video experienced far-reaching success so far, and the numbers speak for themselves. The “reach” is how many Social Media subscribers saw the post and/or watched the video within their newsfeed. The number of “views” is the number of people who opened the video in a separate screen. For the Recycling RoundUp initiative the figures are as follows:

Total Reached: 96,325

Total Views: 12,655

## **6. Brief Summary**

Keep Henrico Beautiful successfully utilized Social Media for environmental education through a video series. The Executive Coordinator built the KHB social media base over the course of a couple of years to the point where an educational campaign would be successful. The first campaign run was titled the Recycling RoundUp. This video series cost nothing to produce, and reached an audience of approximately 100,000 people over the course of 28 videos.

This type of program is innovative in central Virginia as no neighboring localities had utilized social media for environmental education through location-specific videos prior to KHB. In fact, colleagues have approached the Executive Coordinator for assistance in growing their own social media pages so that they may create their own videos.

The social media educational videos targeted adults. Keep Henrico Beautiful typically focuses on school-aged programming, and while this is highly successful, it neglects an entire

demographic of Henrico County citizens. Reinforcing the lessons that they learned as children will help the adults be more responsible with their waste. This will in turn help keep Henrico beautiful, thus reinforcing our overall message.

Social media has the potential of being a wonderful marketing avenue when used properly. It is the opinion of KHB that we successfully developed a program and utilized this communication medium well. While we didn't anticipate the extent of success we would achieve when we started out, it became apparent early on that our particular program was—and will continue to be—extremely well received.

## Supplemental Information Addendum #1

### Descriptions for each Recycling RoundUp Video

**Recycling RoundUp 1-** The Executive Coordinator described the video series and explained how to recycle in Henrico County. Residents are either qualified for curbside recycling, or the drop off locations. She also introduced the brand new drop off location that was recently created.

**Recycling RoundUp 2-** Glass is a material that is accepted for recycling. The Executive Coordinator describes where it goes and how it is separated for processing.

**Recycling RoundUp 3-** This video discusses the plastic types that are accepted through the recycling program: #1 and #2 narrow neck bottles. The Executive Coordinator gave a tutorial on how to find the numbers on the bottles.

**Recycling RoundUp 4-** Details on why we are not able to recycle lids and caps from bottles and jars are given as well as alternatives to throwing them in the trash can.

**Recycling RoundUp 5-** The Executive Coordinator discusses her favorite piece of recyclable material—the aluminum can.

**Recycling RoundUp 6-** This segment discusses plastic bags and explains that they are not accepted for recycling as they jam the machines at the MRF (facility where recyclables go to be sorted prior to being recycled).

**Recycling RoundUp 7-** The topic covered is Styrofoam. Since it is not able to be recycled, the video touches on how it will go to the landfill. However, once in the landfill, it will not decompose because certain types of Styrofoam will never break down.

**Recycling RoundUp 8-** The Executive Coordinator discussed pet waste: how to pick up after your pet, and why it is important.

**Recycling RoundUp 9-** For the Memorial Day holiday, everyone was reminded to keep the three R's in mind (reduce, reuse, recycle), and reminded that refuse and recycling pick-up would be delayed one day that week.

**Recycling RoundUp 10-** Pizza boxes are discussed to answer the question as to why they are not accepted. The Executive Coordinator offers an alternative to throwing the whole thing in the trash by simply cutting out the greasy portions.

**Recycling RoundUp 11-** Are you able to recycle in the rain (yes), and do recyclables get contaminated by rain water (no)?

**Recycling RoundUp 12-** To celebrate the first day of summer, the Executive Coordinator talked about using your recyclables to make arts and crafts projects with your kids. She also promoted KHB's Pinterest page to help with ideas for the projects.

**Recycling RoundUp 13-** The Because We Care roadside/community/school/park adoption program is outlined in this segment.

**Recycling RoundUp 14-** Don't forget that bathroom items are able to be recycled also! Maybe keep a bin in the bathroom as a reminder to also collect these items.

**Recycling RoundUp 15-** The Executive Coordinator discusses cigarette litter and the common misconception that it is biodegradable. However, cigarette butts are made up of plastic fibers and therefore take much longer to break down and more often end up as polluted run-off.

**Recycling RoundUp 16-** The topic discussed is mixed paper recycling, and how it should always be put into the bin to be turned into something new. Paper is able to be recycled approximately 7 times with the ultimate end to the journey being paper towels, tissues, etc.

**Recycling RoundUp 17-** Reduce the amount of trash you create by avoiding single-use products. The example given was plastic water bottles. Limit your use by bringing a reusable water bottle with you.

**Recycling RoundUp 18-** Reuse items more than once to help keep your waste down. The Executive Coordinator gave a craft project during this segment using old beat-up crayons, newspapers, and pizza boxes for people to try out during the heat of the summer.

**Recycling RoundUp 19-** The Executive Coordinator discussed decomposition rates for common recyclable items to help deter folks from throwing them into the trash (and ultimately the landfill) instead of putting them in the recycling bin.

**Recycling RoundUp 20-** If your recycle bin is overflowing, there are a few different options that you may utilize to remedy the situation. First, you may use your own container and put it out on the curbside. Secondly, you may obtain a second 24 gallon bin from CVWMA free of charge for Henrico residents. Thirdly, you may purchase a 96 gallon cart for a one-time fee of \$65.

**Recycling RoundUp 21-** KHB provides educational bulletin board kits for Henrico teachers upon request that are free of charge.

**Recycling RoundUp 22-** This segment discussed the upcoming James River Advisory Council's annual clean-up for potential volunteers. It is a great way for youth to obtain volunteer hours and give back to the community.

**Recycling RoundUp 23-** This video discusses the procedure for properly disposing of paint in Henrico so that it stays out of the watershed.

**Recycling RoundUp 24-** This video depicts proper disposal of different household hazardous waste products at the Public Use Areas.

**Recycling RoundUp 25-** This is the first part of a two part series on yard waste. This portion discusses where to take your brush and yard waste at the landfill/public use area.

**Recycling RoundUp 26-** This is the second part of the series on yard waste. It shows how the waste is mulched and then given to residents for free.

**Recycling RoundUp 27-** The Executive Coordinator discusses the proper disposal of tires in Henrico County.

**Recycling RoundUp 28-** Electronic recycling events are discussed in this segment for the upcoming fall.

## Supplemental Information Addendum #2

Below you will find links to YouTube for the three most popular videos in the series.

Recycling RoundUp19: Decomposition Rates

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvXbrMcambU>



Recycling RoundUp21: Free Educational Materials

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcgZgD8TmW0>



Recycling RoundUp23: Paint Disposal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwfwA3zB14>

