



NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Van Buren School Certified as State's Fourth Litter-Free Zone

VAN BUREN (Feb. 18, 2010) – Tate Elementary in Van Buren has been certified as a Litter-Free Zone by Keep Arkansas Beautiful (KAB).

The school has met all the requirements for certification and was recognized during a special “Rise and Shine assembly” Feb. 12. The school also received Litter-Free Zone signs to post around the campus and \$1,500 in award money from the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation for their work in the program.

“Tate Elementary administrators and staff are using the program to educate, inspire and engage students to personally accept greater responsibility for protecting their environment,” said Robert Phelps, KAB director. “The Litter-Free Zone program is a student-led initiative that empowers students to not only eliminate campus litter but also understand the greater impact litter has on a community, its appearance, pride and environmental quality of life.”

The Litter-Free Zone program, funded by an \$80,000 Wal-Mart Foundation grant and designed for students, encourages students to apply the program’s principles in class, on campus, in the school’s neighborhood and eventually throughout the community. Students participating in the Litter-Free Zone program become “Litter Scene Investigators.” As they discover litter on campus and apply critical thinking, they question where it comes from and who or what might be responsible for creating it. As students collect and analyze their findings, they create solutions for controlling and eliminating the problem, using skills from other core curricula, including

math, science, social studies, English and art. They also visit with local law enforcement officers to learn about litter laws and enforcement practices.

“This program is centered on service learning, providing students a hands-on educational opportunity that extends beyond the classroom and into the community,” said Jack Singleton, Litter-Free Zone statewide coordinator. “Tate Elementary students have the opportunity to improve their school campus and local community, while learning civic responsibility.”

A new program of the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation, the Litter-Free Zone program will be available to 10 Arkansas schools each semester. To apply for the program, contact Singleton at litterfreezonekab@gmail.com.

The Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation provides ongoing support to help certified schools maintain their Litter-Free Zone status. To maintain their certification, Litter-Free Zone schools must have a group of students in the program each year and must participate in the Great American Cleanup™ in Arkansas each spring and the Great Arkansas Cleanup each fall.

About Keep Arkansas Beautiful

As a certified state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful Inc., Keep Arkansas Beautiful works to inspire and educate individuals to reduce litter, recycle and keep Arkansas beautiful. It operates as a division of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and is overseen by a nine-member commission appointed by the governor. KAB is funded by 1 percent of the eighth-cent conservation tax and, by utilizing volunteers, returns to the state a cost benefit of \$15.34 in community service for each program dollar spent. The Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation, a nonprofit corporation, is a voluntary association of individuals for charitable and educational purposes. For more information about KAB, call toll-free 888-742-8701 or visit KeepArkansasBeautiful.com.