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Home

Programs ▾

Services ▾

News & information ▾

Students ▾

Contact ▾

Search Voinovich School

Features More >

Creek Jam raises funds for clean water during Brew Week

PepsiCo and Keep America Beautiful award Rural Action and Ohio University grant to promote event recycling

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Phoebe Parker and Daniel Kington

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Keep America Beautiful and PepsiCo Recycling recently awarded an Events Recycling Program grant to a partnership between Rural Action and Ohio University. Both organizations are members of the Keep Southeast Ohio Beautiful affiliate and work to reduce the waste that enters the landfill in the region. This funding will focus on increasing recycling at festivals and events, while simultaneously boosting awareness about zero waste efforts in the community.

On its Athens campus, Ohio University's Zero Waste Initiative at the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs and Campus Recycling are working with the University's athletics department to increase the number of recycling bins available on athletic fields. Campus Recycling has placed 20 new bins, shaped like Pepsi bottles, on campus athletic sites such as Bob Wren Baseball Stadium, Chessa Soccer Field, the Ohio Softball Field and the Aquatic Center as part of the award.

The Voinovich School and Campus Recycling work regularly with OHIO Athletics to demonstrate a commitment to recycling at home tailgating events and by supporting the GameDay Recycling Challenge, which OHIO has won nationally two years in a row. The PepsiCo grant will enable the expansion of recycling efforts and education on campus. The placement of these bins will reach broader bases of students and community Bobcat supporters, as well as engage the teams themselves.

Andrew Ladd, manager at Campus Recycling, is optimistic about this new capacity. "Athletic events are when the largest crowds of students and community members come together for a single purpose. Through the more visible presence of the PepsiCo bins and volunteers, we are able to actively engage fans on how every one of us can make a positive difference," he said.

At certain athletic events, the bins will be supported by "bin goalies," students who volunteer to oversee the materials being recycled into the bins. Bin goalies share their knowledge of recycling with fans who can then utilize that information at home and across the community.

"We are fortunate on campus to have mixed recycling collection, so these extra bins from Pepsi will make it easier to recycle bottles, cans, paper and more, even when students, teams, campers and fans are out on the fields. Convenience is key. What a great and simple way for the OHIO Bobcat community to show its team spirit—keeping its hometown facilities clean to enjoy," said Voinovich School Project Manager, Elissa





Welch. "Our ongoing work with Rural Action and as a member of Keep Southeast Ohio Beautiful creates a broader community of waste awareness that we can all contribute to, even with just a bottle at a game."

Rural Action operates Zero Waste Event Productions (ZWEP), which aims to increase recycling rates at indoor and outdoor live music events, sporting events, community events and conferences through education and waste sorting. Additional recycling bins available thanks to PepsiCo's grant will expand Rural Action's efforts.

In its eighth year of funding from the Sugar Bush Foundation, a supporting organization of the Ohio University Foundation, the Voinovich School and Rural Action service the campus and community, respectively, as part of the Appalachia Ohio Zero Waste Initiative. Part of this work is a shared goal of helping events and venues become 'zero waste' - a threshold measured by achieving a 90% or higher diversion rate of materials that would otherwise go to the landfill, through reuse, recycling and composting.

To learn more, please visit www.ohio.edu/zerowaste or contact zerowaste@ohio.edu to become involved in zero waste activities on campus.