

# New Keep America Beautiful Litter Initiative to Focus on Cigarette Litter



**W**ith ever-tightening restrictions on smoking in public places in recent years, more and more smokers have been forced to smoke outside. As a result, cigarette litter has been on the rise. To combat this growing litter problem, KAB is launching a new national initiative aimed specifically at cigarette litter. Through a three-year grant from Philip Morris U.S.A., KAB has added a new national staff position to both address the litter issue as a whole and to create a program to effectively reduce cigarette litter.

appropriate receptacles and the use of portable ashtrays in this program. Carrie Gallagher Sussman has joined Keep America Beautiful as Program



*Above: Cigarette butts collected recently by Clean Virginia Waterways, web: longwood.edu/cleanva*

*Left: KAB's portable pocket ashtrays extinguish cigarettes safely and help keep cigarette litter off the ground. Please help us spread the message to keep cigarette litter out of our environment.*

in this issue to focus their efforts on sustainable change.

This is the first time that an individual item in the litter stream has been singled out by KAB as a target for educational efforts. It is interesting to note that cigarette litter is viewed differently by the general public than other forms of litter. Because it is small, many people don't regard a cigarette butt as litter. Early research states that because they must be extinguished before disposal, adults who smoke erroneously believe they are acting responsibly by putting them out on the ground. In other situations appropriate ash/trash receptacles are not readily available.

The first phase of KAB's new initiative includes a literature review on litter and cigarette litter research and identification of best practices

throughout the KAB affiliate network for effectively reducing cigarette litter. We will then enhance existing cigarette litter information on our website with select findings.

"Philip Morris U.S.A. is pleased to be partnering with Keep America Beautiful in this important initiative," said Ellen Merlo, Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs. "We are excited to be building on our long-standing relationship with KAB by playing a role in helping to reduce cigarette litter."

Phase Two will include education and testing strategies with smokers, such as the use of pocket ashtrays, to raise awareness of the problem. "We will also begin coalition building among stakeholders, i.e., building managers/owners, business owners, groundskeepers, maintenance personnel and community leaders," says Ms. Sussman, "to marshal support for the distribution of educational materials created. Our goal is to raise awareness among adults who smoke of problems associated with cigarette litter."

"We are very excited by this opportunity to address a major community challenge—cigarette litter," said KAB President Ray Empson. "We are grateful to Philip Morris U.S.A. for their support and long-term commitment to this new initiative."

To read more about cigarette litter, log onto Keep America Beautiful's website, [www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org). Pocket ashtrays may also be purchased on this site—these are ashtrays small enough to fit in a pocket, purse or briefcase. They safely hold and extinguish the fire of many cigarette butts until the smoker reaches any trash receptacle. In the past, KAB affiliates successfully distributed over 300,000 RJR Reynolds pocket ashtrays. Research in other countries and by Philip Morris in this country says smokers find them useful.

To read more about Philip Morris U.S.A.'s position on litter, please visit the "Environment" section of [www.philipmorrisusa.com](http://www.philipmorrisusa.com).

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The cigarette litter initiative will be facilitated through new partnerships with municipalities, businesses and building owners in conjunction with our community-based affiliate network. KAB will incorporate the use of

Director to launch this national initiative. With a strong background in nonprofit organization management and program development as well as success in the business world, Carrie will comfortably lead all stakeholders