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Elected Officials Talk Trash For Litter Prevention

Don't Trash Arizona Partners With Whataburger to Raise Awareness

PHOENIX (April 16, 2015)—On Tuesday, April 21st, you can order a burger, celebrate the environment, and talk trash with Valley mayors—all in one drive-thru visit at select Whataburger restaurants. In preparation for Earth Day, a partnership between *Don't Trash Arizona* and Whataburger seeks to remind motorists that fast-food trash is one of the most commonly littered items on Valley freeways.

Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers, Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord, and Chandler Vice Mayor Kevin Hartke will greet hungry drivers at the drive-thru window of Whataburger locations in their respective cities. They will engage drivers regarding the harmful effects of litter and the simple steps needed to prevent it.

Don't Trash Arizona is a litter prevention program conducted by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to address the environmental, economic, health and safety impacts of roadway litter. The partnership with Whataburger coincides with Earth Month, precedes Earth Day by one day, and marks the launch of a new “trash talk” campaign for the anti-litter initiative.

“We already know that some of the most-commonly littered items are cups and wrappers, many of which originate from fast food establishments,” said MAG Chair Michael LeVault, mayor of Youngtown. “This partnership allows *Don't Trash Arizona* to deliver its litter prevention message in a direct and memorable way. It's not every day that a mayor hands you your cheeseburger.”

Whataburger will distribute educational materials from *Don't Trash Arizona* to its patrons at each of its 18 Valley locations on that same day. In addition, Whataburger will display the new-look *Don't Trash Arizona* signage at its drive-thru windows indefinitely in an effort to continue to educate drivers about litter prevention. The new look includes bright-colored, bold graphics to better target younger (18-35) males, who make up the largest percentage of litterers.

“Whataburger is dedicated to the communities we call home, and we're honored to be the first restaurant to partner with *Don't Trash Arizona*,” said Whataburger Director of Operations Delson Montes. “Whataburger is looking forward to working with the Valley community to decrease the amount of freeway litter in Arizona, and we hope to see some familiar faces stop by to visit with our local mayors.”

Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers, who was once in the restaurant business himself, is looking forward to his stint at the drive-thru. “One of my messages will be that we don't want to see anyone get a \$500 fine over a little \$5 hamburger wrapper being tossed out the window,” said Mayor Weiers, who will be at the Whataburger location at 4280 W. Bell Road, Glendale. *(For exact times of mayors' service, please contact Kelly Taft at 602-452-5020.)*

“Litter is not only ugly and bad for our environment, it also has an economic cost,” added Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord. “It costs taxpayers about \$3 million each year for crews to pick up roadside litter, and it costs our economy if we fail to attract tourists and businesses because of that trash.” Mayor Lord will be at the Goodyear Whataburger, 14251 W. Indian School Road, Goodyear.

Chandler Vice Mayor Kevin Hartke, who will be at the Whataburger at 7375 W. Chandler Boulevard, agrees the event is a good opportunity to stem highway littering. “We appreciate that we have found an enthusiastic partner in Whataburger, as we continue to work to encourage responsible behavior from Valley's drivers.”

Statistics indicate that about 111,000 bags of litter are collected from the Valley's freeways every year, equally about 1.2 million pounds of trash. Beyond wrappers and cups, other commonly littered items include cigarette butts, food and small papers.

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