

## NARRATIVE: "(Trash Goes)In the Bin/Beautification Program"

The City of Deltona was hard hit by the 2008 housing recession, with almost twenty percent of its residential structures either foreclosed or abandoned. The large number of vacant homes was a major contributor to a resident population that lost its sense of pride and saw a decline in overall interest in the appearance and maintenance of its neighborhoods. There were adequate laws regarding trash collection, however those violations had dropped in priority, in enforcing all of the City's ordinances. In June 2015, newly hired City Manager Jane Shang recognized in order for citizens to again take pride in their home town, the effort would need to start with something as simple as taking out the trash.

Cleaning up the trash and beautifying our yards became the City's major project, with the end goal of a community whose residents have regained pride in the City they call home.

The first step was a review of the existing waste collection ordinance, to update and streamline the language. Then in January 2016, the City implemented a six month awareness campaign for "(Trash Goes)In the Bin" using its website, government TV station, social media and one-on-one interactions between City employees and waste collectors, and the City's residents. The awareness campaign was parsed into separate phases, each delivering a specific message. And each phase followed the fundamental ABCs of marketing: Awareness, Benefit and Call to Action. In order to help residents change the old habits of trash collection, City staff wanted to make sure they recognized the benefits of following the new ordinances. Keeping trash in waste bins kept neighborhoods neat and attractive, and more important was sanitary.

Within the first three months of the awareness campaign, residents started to work with their neighbors, self-enforcing the new trash guidelines. And in August after a one month amnesty period, the enforcement of the new trash ordinance went into effect.

The success is evident throughout Deltona... where once there were piles of old furniture and bagged trash, now neighborhoods show neatly lined up waste bins and bulk waste taken to the curb on collection day. And to give a quantifiable statistic to the success of the program: there was an average of fifty abatements/violations of the ordinance each month from August 2016

through December 2016, compared to an average of 25 abatements/ violations each month from January 2017 through mid-March... indicative of the success in changing habits and mindsets.

As residents were learning about trash collection, the City inaugurated the "Beautify Deltona" co-program... encouraging the public to take pride in their homes' appearance. The City took the lead, showing by example, re-landscaping City facilities and parks. The City also partnered with local hardware vendors, to allow residents to purchase certain landscape material at a discount, as well conducting a landscape contest that awarded a new yard to a resident.

Deltona's solid waste collection is handled by Waste Pro, and enforcing the new trash ordinance required both City and Waste Pro staff to meet almost weekly. This coordination between government and private industry created an effective process of crafting an ordinance that had realistic mandates which could be followed by both residents and City staff.

The long term success of Deltona's new trash ordinance has been noticed by peer municipalities, for the minimal amount of disruption to the waste collection process.