



Keep Kenosha Beautiful

History: Keep Kenosha Beautiful is a commission of the Mayor of Kenosha. The Keep Kenosha Beautiful Commission was organized in 1988 as a result of an ordinance adopted by the Common Council based on the Keep America Beautiful System.

The original duties of the Commission:

- To promote public interest in the general improvement of the environment of the City of Kenosha
- To initiate, plan, direct and coordinate programs for litter control, general beautification, and recycling in the city in cooperation with citizens, government, businesses and industries with the city limits of Kenosha.
- To implement and maintain the Keep America Beautiful System (The membership was cancelled due to costs, between \$3000 to \$4000 per year for membership and intensive administrative labor)
- To study, investigate and develop plans for improving the image of the City of Kenosha by beautifying the streets, highways, alleys, stream banks, lots, yards and other similar places on both public and private property in the said City.
- To aid in the recycling and elimination of trash in the above mentioned places.
- To encourage the placing, planting, and preservation of trees, flowers, plants, shrubs, and other objects of ornamentation in said City.
- To develop and assess the implementation of plans for the general improvement of the environment of the City of Kenosha.

The Commission started as a fifteen person commission and was changed to an eleven person commission in May of 2005. The Commission's duties have evolved over the years in response to the needs of the City and Kenosha Citizens.

KKB Programs

Clean-Ups: The KKB Coordinator organizes clean-ups around the City of Kenosha. The KKB commission supplies bags, gloves, tally sheets and activities such as the Keep Kenosha Beautiful "Trash or Treasure" game. Over 2000 volunteers cleaned up our neighborhoods, parks, and beaches. Each year this number grows as the commission partners with educators, local businesses, civic groups and families. The clean-ups educate, promote community service and civic pride, fight blight, and increase Kenosha property values.

Highlights of the program are listed below:

- There were 2000 clean up volunteers, cleaning on average two hours per clean-up. This adds up to 3000 hours of volunteer labor. If we were to pay them minimum wage this equals \$29,000.
- Kenosha Unified School District distributed KKB clean-up supplies to classes throughout the Unified system. This was kicked off in spring 2009 to enhance Earth Day activities and education. Some of the schools who participated were: Indian Trails, Mahone, Roosevelt, Lake View, Jefferson, Tremper, Frank, McKinley, Reuther, Harbor Side, and Bradford. Friedens Lutheran, Armitage and Holy Rosary also participated in clean ups.
- KKB's International Coastal clean-up in September recruited volunteers from The North Face, Snap-on Incorporated, KUSD, Kenosha Sport Fisherman and Kenosha citizens to come out and clean as well as take inventory of the litter on our coastline.

-The Sunny Squads were created late spring thanks to the inspiration of six year old girl. The program encourages kids and families to get out and clean-up Kenosha. It teaches the five R's (reduce, reuse, recycle, repurpose, and rethink). The program has thirty families signed up since the inception in late May. KKB continues to grow the program in partnership with KUSD and the Boys and Girls Club. We will have two specific types of squads, one will focus on families and the other will be introduced into KUSD and private grade schools. (The school squads will focus on keeping the school grounds clean.)

-“Students Today Leaders Forever” groups from Minnesota and North Dakota brought over 80 high school students to clean-up Kenosha. KKB gave them supplies and educated them about Kenosha and Lake Michigan.

-Corporations such as Best Buy and The North Face ask their employees to participate in service projects throughout Kenosha. This is a mandatory expectation upon being hired. Both groups have participated in large clean-ups around the city.

-The commission received a grant for \$10,000 to educate Kenosha about the most prolific litter in the city. The Cigarette Litter Prevention campaign was kicked off in 2009.

-The campaign prompted the Smart Girls to clean up over 4000 cigarette butts in three hours, on Alfred Beach. The contained litter they picked up has been used as an effective visual marketing tool for the campaign.

-Storm water Utility and KKB commission partnered to educate Kenosha about storm water and cigarette litter and the effects it has throughout the city.

-Advertising in Kenosha News, Happenings Magazine, WLIP and the Lenny Palmer show increased awareness of cigarette litter. There were also two stories in the Kenosha News raising awareness about the campaign. (The articles prompted two letters from State Senator Wirch complementing KKB on their efforts.)

-The KKB Commission attended events and educated Kenosha about cigarette litter. Some of the events include: Celebrate Earth Day at Gateway, Bloomin' Days, Arts & Flowers, Florence Parry Heide Day, International Coastal Clean-up, Tavern League meeting, Kenosha Sports Fisherman Association meeting, Green Kenosha meetings and the Snap-on Incorporated Green Works event.

-Free Pocket ashtrays were also handed out at events and displayed at the Municipal Golf Course. Lenny Palmer handed them out at his live events in partnership with the Tavern League.

-State smoking ban passed and will take effect on July 5th, 2010. KKB will continue to educate in 2010 through strategic placement of cigarette receptacles, posters distributed to business throughout the city, public events and speaking engagements.

Nice Job Neighbor: Kenosha citizens are able to recognize and thank their neighbor's beautification efforts, by nominating them for a *Nice Job Neighbor* article in the Kenosha News. The articles are written, for free, by a former Commission member. These articles along with a color photo, are printed in the Kenosha News, starting in late May and continuing until the end of October (weather permitting). Highlights are listed below:

-Hundreds of door tags have been handed out each year. The nominations (door tags) are appreciated and spread good will through neighborhoods. The actual articles are an extra bonus.

-Great publicity for KKB, the city and its partners. There are various locations around the city where people can pick up the door hangers. These locations are listed next to the photo every week.

- Low costs to KKB, the door tags and replacement display cases cost approximately \$300 per year.
- The volunteer writer puts in approximately two and a half hours per week researching, interviewing and writing. The volunteer does not charge us for gas mileage. The program lasts between 20 and 23 weeks. Fifty volunteer hours at \$25 per hour (local freelance writer wage) is a savings of \$1375.
- The actual space in the Kenosha News, if we were asked to pay, would cost approximately \$870 per week. A full page display (we have had one this year), would cost KKB \$3,300. The financial value of these articles comes to \$21,570 a season.

Adopt-A-Spots: There are approximately fifty volunteer garden plots throughout Kenosha. Groups, businesses and families adopt an existing plot, plant annuals and perennials, and pledge to keep it weed and litter-free for one year. Keep Kenosha Beautiful supplies the plants in partnership with Gateway Technical College Horticulture department, DeVroomen, Anton's, Burr Oaks and Intrinsic Perennial Farm. KKB also supplies cocoa mulch, fertilizer, compost bags, gloves, pre-emergent, water and "emergency" support. Highlights are listed below:

- Approximately one hundred volunteers work on the gardens. Their efforts are appreciated by citizens as well as tourists. People stroll by the gardeners and constantly compliment the gardener's efforts. This program builds civic pride in Kenosha.
- Fiscally responsible, the focus is on perennial flowers which come back each year. Annuals are often donated or purchased at a generous discount. KKB spends approximately \$4500 on the fifty plus gardens each year.
- Volunteers on average work one hour per week; twenty weeks per season; 2000 hours of gardening @ \$7.25 per hour equals approximately \$16,000 in free labor.
- Partnerships with corporate sponsors and businesses. The North Face and Snap-on Incorporated along with Heim's Toy Store, Alpaca Pottery and Equinox have volunteer gardens.
- KKB is a Union Park "KUPP" project partner along with Lemon Street Gallery and the Kenosha Parks Department. There are a total of seven new gardens at Union park which include the popular mosaic pots.
- Some of the more public adopt-a-spots include Troha gardens, City Hall gardens, Museum Fountain garden, Kenosha Library gardens, Rotary Tot Park garden, and the Light house garden.
- Gateway Technical College Horticulture department has donated "Ball Test Plants" for specific Adopt-a-Spots. Ball donates flowers to Gateway and then visits the test sites to assess the plant's progress under various conditions.
- Future Adopt-a-Spot plans include several rain gardens. Some proposed sites include Anderson and Columbus parks. These public sites will have a functional purpose which is to draw storm water runoff down into our water table. The gardens will also serve as an educational tool which will inform the public about Kenosha's original native landscape and the advantages of reintroducing native plants back into our landscape. The rain garden project also supports "Storm Water Education".

Future Goals: KKB hopes to kick off a large volunteer blitz in 2010 to assist in some of the projects listed below. We would continue to partner with KUSD and introduce new projects to assist with their service learning goals. We will also position ourselves with key contacts at both UW-Parkside and Carthage College.

-River Crossings sub-division has a storm water swale that, budget pending, will be changed into a bio-swale over the next three to five years. KKB would be in charge of volunteer recruiting for this project.

-KUSD and KKB along with Kenosha Parks hopes to partner on various projects. Some of the pending ideas are rain garden participation, and recycling container construction.

-Creation of more community art projects like the mosaic pots, to be place in urban parks. Union Park is the template we would use to move this program forward.

-We will continue working on our **Keep Kenosha Beautiful website**. A former Commission member and KKB volunteer designed the new and improved website for KKB. KKB will add more information regarding the Sunny Squads. We will also creating a clean-up survey for Sunny Squads and other volunteer groups. The survey will make it easy for groups to document their clean up success. (It will also save administration time for everyone involved.) A volunteer project "Hot" list has also been discussed. This list would include garden planting events or city clean up events. It may even include a community art project such as the creation of a mosaic pot.

The more volunteers we recruit the more we can achieve!