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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Solid Waste Authority Recognizes Fall 2022 Plastic Film Challenge Participants

This past Fall, the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority (Authority) held its sixth Plastic Film Recycling Challenge for schools in Oneida and Herkimer Counties in an effort to educate students and the community on proper recycling of plastic film.

Since 2009, retail stores have been required by New York State law to provide plastic film recycling if they provide their customers with plastic carry out bags and meet certain size requirements. In March 2020, a new law was enacted which completely banned the distribution of plastic carry out bags, while still requiring retailers to provide plastic film recycling. For more information about who this law effects, exempt bags and more, please visit the NYS Bag Waste Reduction Law page on the Department of Environmental Conservation's website.

Sixteen schools participated in the Fall 2022 Plastic Film Recycling Challenge and had five weeks to collect plastic film for recycling. Student and teacher volunteers from the participating schools collected and weighed the plastic film and delivered the plastic film to participating retailers so that it could be recycled instead of going in the landfill.

The following plastic film items can be recycled at participating grocery stores and other retailers, and should not be placed in your recycling bin:

- Grocery Bags
- Bread Bags
- Case Overwrap
- Dry Cleaning Bags
- Newspaper Sleeves
- Ice Bags
- Wood Pellet Bags
- Reclosable Bags
- Produce Bags
- Bubble Wrap
- Salt Bags
- Cereal Bags
- Plastic Bubble Mailing Envelopes

When determining if your plastic film can be recycled, think "When in doubt, stretch it out!" If it stretches, then it is a type of plastic film that can be dropped off at a retailer for recycling. If it does not stretch and is crinkly or rigid, then it can not be recycled and should go in the garbage.

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Over the course of the five weeks that the challenge was running, a total of 3,585 pounds of plastic film was collected for recycling. This is about the same weight as a mid-size sedan, or the equivalent of 293,000 plastic grocery bags!

Below are the 1st and 2nd place winners out of the participating elementary schools and middle/high schools.

Elementary School:

1st Place – Sauquoit Elementary School The 345 students at Sauquoit Elementary School collected 1,194 pounds of plastic film. This equals 3.5 pounds per student, and 34% of the total amount of plastic film collected.

2nd Place – Poland Elementary School The 227 students at Poland Elementary School collected 695 pounds of plastic film. This equals 3.1 pounds per student, and 20% of the total amount of plastic film collected.

The Authority also thanks Owen D Young Central School, Myles Elementary School, McConnellsville Elementary School, Camden Elementary School, and Conkling Elementary School, and Columbus Elementary School for their excellent participation.

Middle/High School:

1st Place – Remsen Jr./Sr. High School The 198 students at Remsen Jr./Sr. High School collected 568 pounds of plastic film. This equals 3.0 pounds per student, and 16% of the total amount of plastic film collected.

2nd Place – Holland Patent Middle School The 283 students at Holland Patent Middle School collected 240 pounds of plastic film. This equals 0.8 pounds per student, and 7% of the total amount of plastic film collected.

The Authority also thanks Owen D Young Central School, Mount Markham Middle School, Clinton Senior High School, Camden Middle School, Camden High School, Proctor High School, and Perry Junior High School.

Sauquoit Elementary School will receive a visit from the Utica Zoomobile and Remsen Jr./Sr. High School will receive their choice of a Trex Decking Cornhole Set or a lunch period hosted by a KISS FM DJ to award them for their recycling efforts. In addition, all schools that participated will receive a plaque commemorating their participation.

“The Authority is very grateful for the efforts from all of the schools that participated in the Fall 2022 Plastic Film Challenge,” said Authority Recycling Coordinator Eileen Brinck. “Not only are they bringing awareness to plastic film recycling, but they are also helping keep it out of the landfill. Considering how light it is, 3,550 pounds is a huge amount of plastic film– and it was all kept out of the landfill,” she continued.

For a list of participating retailers near you, please visit www.ohswa.org. If you are unable to deliver your plastic film for proper recycling, please place plastic film in your regular garbage for disposal. For more information about the Authority’s School Recycling Program, please contact Eileen Brinck, Recycling Coordinator, at (315) 733-1224 ext. 1400 or via email at eileenb@ohswa.org.