

## Littering is a Violation

Recently there have been discussions and meetings to discuss making our community cleaner. The City, along with several local organizations, is concerned about the amount of litter observed along our streets and public areas. The discarding of trash is not only unsightly but is a violation of city ordinance and state statutes. A City of Tullahoma littering citation is charged at \$165. Littering charges may be referred to either City court or Coffee County General Sessions Court.

Thankfully there are organizations and businesses that have adopted sections of our community to periodically clean up. Most of the clean up events are weeks and sometimes months apart. This allows for a great deal of litter to accumulate. As a community we should not rely on these organizations and businesses to pick up litter. It should be a concern for all of us and promptly report instances of litter.

What can you as a citizen do? The state provides a toll free number to report violators. By calling 1-877-854-8837 and providing a tag number and vehicle description, the state will send a letter to the registered owner identifying them as having been observed littering and explaining possible consequences. The City's public works department (454-1768) can be called for large items that are along the roadways.

Tennessee Code Annotated 39-14-502, and 503, discuss the littering statutes and specify the requirements for covering and securing loads in vehicles. In most cases, the act of littering is a conscious decision, and officers are instructed to issue citations. Studies have shown that a single cigarette butt takes from 18 months to 10 years to biodegrade. The tossing of cigarette butts, throwing out fast food bags, tossing beer bottles from a vehicle is a common occurrence, subject to a \$165 fine. You decide. Any questions about the littering ordinance may be directed to Chief Paul Blackwell at (931) 455-0530, or [pblackwell@tullahomtn.gov](mailto:pblackwell@tullahomtn.gov).