



# MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 27, 2020

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## **Mayor Jacobs Highlights the ‘Great Garbage Purge of 2020’**

*KNOXVILLE, Tenn.*— Throughout April, Knox County Convenience Centers took in an unprecedented amount of waste and the most ever in a single month – mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the city has scaled back waste collection services, Knox County remained open at full capacity to continue diligently serving its residents.

“We’ve had some months over the years where we took in a lot of single material, but never one where almost everything collected set a record – and these are records that will stand for many years to come,” said Solid Waste Director Drew Thurman. “People were consuming and generating more waste in their homes because they were staying at home either due to restrictions or their own volition in order to stay safe.”

Waste typically handled by businesses was now in the hands of residents, Thurman said. Many people busied themselves with spring cleanouts, catching up on overdue chores or starting home improvements. People also were ordering more items from online retailers that created larger amounts of packaging such as cardboard.

In just April, waste and recycling drop off amounted to an almost 40 percent increase in waste and recycling tonnage resulting. One of the biggest increases was an astounding 138 percent jump in the amount of scrap metal processed—a number that is comparable to more than 1 million pounds in a single month.

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs was impressed with the department’s work.

“I’m so proud of all our Solid Waste workers. While most people were staying at home, our folks were working in more difficult conditions than they have ever had to work with almost no down time,” Mayor Jacobs said. “Those crews are really some of the hardest-working folks in county government, and they have shown up every day during all of this, done their job, and done a really great job doing it.”

Still, the Solid Waste team urges Knox County residents to reduce their waste by bringing only bagged household trash and limiting waste to less than one truckload. Officials also urge residents to utilize the operation’s less busy days: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

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