



Cincinnati Park Board

MEDIA RELEASE

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WHO: Cincinnati Park Board

WHAT: Park Board Receives Grant to Fund 20 Big Belly “Smart” Cans

The Park Board continues to lead the region in making the Queen City a Green City, with the addition of 20 new Big Belly solar powered trash compactor units. The Big Belly units are powered by sunlight, crunch trash, and need less maintenance compared to traditional trash cans. These newest units are even “smarter” with a new web based mapping system. The communication protocols, designed by UC engineering students, will notify Park managers when individual units are filled and ready for collection.

The 20 new Big Belly units were funded by an \$88,000 grant from the Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, as directed by donor advisor Paul G. Sittenfeld, a longtime close friend of Mrs. Coombe. The gift honors Mrs. Coombe’s interest in green stewardship and recognizes Mrs. Coombe’s lifelong friend, Lib Stone, whose abiding interest in conservation and the Parks are being commemorated in this way.

WHERE: The 20 new Big Belly cans are being deployed in 3 downtown parks – see one for yourself at Eden Park, Lytle Park or Piatt Park. The 10 older smart cans will be sent for use at the Park Nature Centers and demonstrate to students environmentally sound maintenance practices used in Parks.

PARK BOARD USES TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENT

The innovative Big Belly unit, produced by Seahorse Power Company, harnesses the sun’s energy for trash compaction. A sensor “eye” detects when contents are ready to be compacted. With a 9 to 1 compaction ratio, there is more room for garbage, resulting in less frequent pickups for more maintenance efficiency and cleaner parks. In addition to being more efficient and using staff time more effectively, fewer trash runs by the trucks means a reduction in the use of fuel and a reduction in air polluting emissions.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

The Cincinnati Park Board has partnered with Seahorse Power and the University of Cincinnati to develop global positioning technology for the smart cans. Seahorse Power gave UC a research grant for senior engineering students to design a web based system for the units to signal when they are full. As a result, the 20 new Big Belly units will signal their status by lighting up on the map when they are full. This will provide even greater efficiency, allowing Park crews to schedule real-time trash routes based on volume of trash instead of stopping at every can, every time, whether full or not.

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