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Hazardous waste drop-off a hit

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A steady stream of cars and trucks pulled into the west parking area at Turfway Park on Saturday, loaded with everything from televisions and computers to large drums of oil and much smaller containers filled with prescription drugs.

Each was greeted by one of the more than 60 volunteers on hand, and, after a brief conversation, was funneled to a dropoff lane.

Unlike a similar event in the spring, Saturday's Household Waste Collection went off pretty much without a hitch.

Organizers say that was partly attributed to the new site, but also because high-volume items, such as paint and appliances, were not accepted this time around. More than 80,000 gallons of paint and 9,720 appliances were collected at the earlier event.

At the April collection, which took place at a Toyota facility in Erlanger, cars were backed up onto Interstate 275 and some had to be turned away near the end of the day.

"This is going much more smoothly," Kelly Chapman of the Boone County Division of Solid Waste Management said. "We just send them to the right line, get them unloaded and they are on their way."

Eric Anderson of Burlington pulled his SUV with Active Duty Military license plates carrying several large vats filled with liquid.

Anderson, 38, who recently returned from deployment in Iraq, was dropping off about four gallons of antifreeze and motor oil.

"I like doing stuff myself, and the only thing that prohibits me is finding a way to get rid of stuff," Anderson said. "I think it's great that they've got something like this so people can get rid of things the right way."

Jamie Holtzapfel of Sanitation District No. 1, one of the event sponsors, said the groups involved came together because they share a common goal.

"We joined together because we all want to preserve and protect the environment," Holtzapfel said. "We felt like we could provide better service this way."

Sean Westmeier is the Kentucky sales manager for United Solutions Inc., one of the companies that "get rid of stuff."

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"People bring in everything from pickle jars filled with oil to 55-gallon drums," Westmeier said. "It's great to see so many people here because it's easier to do the wrong thing."

All of the anti-freeze and oil that is collected, Westmeier says, is taken back to the company's Sharonville facility, then recycled and reused.

Chapman said everything that is taken in is either recycled or disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

Near the exit to the site, Bill Mark of the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike force was standing in front of two 5-gallon buckets that, at first glance looked to contain candy.

They were actually filled with hundreds of pills that had been dropped off throughout the day.

"We'll probably take in about 50 pounds today, which is what we collect in a month at one of our dropoff sites," Mark said.

Chapman said the organizers would like to hold at least one waste collection event each year.

The event was open to residents of Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties.

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