

Business Citations

But why should enforcement be limited to individual citizens? Valdosta has already established that “person” also means commercial business and property owners. If these locations are reported to the City Marshall or other applicable agency, shouldn’t they also be aggressively cited as well? The memorandum from the Chief of the Valdosta Police Department in 2018 states that the reason for the aggressive litter citations is due to the fact that litter has gotten out of control over the years and has prevented Public Works from being able to perform their primary routines of trash and sanitation. Why would only individuals be held accountable and not also the commercial business and property owners? Those owners also enable and allow the litter accumulation to the point where it is unsanitary and negatively impacts our waterways. Various sites have been reported to the City Marshall for enforcement. However these have been considered resolved by the City Marshall, when in actuality they have remained untouched and in the same dilapidated condition they were more than 30 days after being reported.

Coordination

The 2010 SWMP directed production of an Enforcement Response Plan (ERP), the most recent version of which is from [November 2015](#). That ERP seems like a very useful document, with specific directions for the Utilities and Engineering Departments. However, curiously it does not mention Code Enforcement. It also says nothing about trash cans. Meanwhile, [City Ordinances Sec. 82-1\(d\)](#) says: “*Any city police officer, marshal, firefighter, employee of the parks and recreation department of the city, code inspector, or building code inspector is empowered to enforce the provisions of this section by issuing a citation and bring the accused before the judge of the municipal court for the city.*”

Maybe that is the underlying source of delay in addressing this decade-old trash problem: it seems to be scattered across several departments. How can they be coordinated to solve this trash problem?

Upstream Economics

As Mayor Scott James also [said on his radio show](#), “I’m going to call water bottles a plague.” Nobody actually needs plastic water bottles. Valdosta has invested in its drinking water, which is good quality. Metal and glass water bottles are easy to obtain, last a long time, and people are unlikely to throw them away.

Ten U.S. states plus Guam currently have [bottle deposit laws](#). In those states the bottle and can litter problem is markedly less, because people redeem containers for cash.

In those bottle deposit states, bottle producers also tend to deploy [reverse vending machines](#), which accept bottles or cans and dispense cash. Bobby McKenzie can attest reverse vending machines work, and can be found even in small villages in Romania, which is one of many countries that have bottle deposit laws. Valdosta is doing great work with its recycling program, but more can be done, funded by the companies that are producing the bottles and cans.

An even bigger problem is styrofoam containers, which break into ever-smaller pieces, which are impossible to clean up by ordinary means. Wildlife eat them and cannot digest them.