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# M-COG director trying to get municipalities in line with junk autos law

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The whole idea behind the Mountain Council of Governments (M-COG) abandoned auto law is to get abandoned autos off the streets of local municipalities, so says the COG director.

Dan Guydish again explained the junk autos law, which the COG drafted, and some local municipalities have adopted.

Guydish said the program would work only if all municipalities cooperated on the issue and he has been trying to get them to work together.

"The main purpose (of the law) is to get these autos off the streets," Guydish said. "If someone's auto gets towed in, they have to pay to get it back. If they don't pay by a certain time, we are entitled to sell it, and share in the proceeds."

The autos would be towed to a central area and the towing company would get its fees from the sale of the auto. The COG would get the rest.

"What we get if we sell an auto would depend on how much it was worth," Guydish said. "If it was a junker, we would still get something, and they (the towing company) would too."

Robert Dougherty, public works director and engineer for the City of Hazleton, said the city deals with between 200 and 300 such autos every year.

Hazle Township Supervisor Anthony Matz said the township has at least as many as the city each year.

The M-COG has asked all area municipalities to adopt the law it has drafted, thus taking away the opportunity for someone with a junk auto to move it from one municipality to another and never deal with it.

Guydish explained that each municipality has a law that is similar in that it gives a specified amount of time for someone to get the abandoned auto off the street, or off private property.

If the M-COG law is adopted, each municipality would observe when the clock began ticking in the other municipality.

The M-COG law also has provisions for a municipality to tow away an abandoned auto – one which does not have a valid registration and inspection sticker – at the municipality's expense to a common impound area.

The municipality would then have the opportunity to get its money back by surcharging the owner for the towing when the owner goes to claim the auto, or the opportunity to sell the auto and take in the proceeds, if the auto goes unclaimed.

Guydish said in municipalities that don't have their own police department, code enforcement officers can tag the cars and run the program.

Dougherty said in the city, police handle the complaints of cars abandoned on the street and the code enforcement officer handles complaints on private property.