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New Mexico Recycling Coalition Earns Walmart Grant to Help Stop Hunger through Food Waste Management!

Santa Fe – The New Mexico Recycling Coalition is excited to announce a new food scraps management program funded by a generous \$50,000 grant from The Walmart Foundation’s State Giving Program. The project, entitled “Reducing Food Waste in New Mexico: Feeding the Hungry, Building Our Soils and Diverting Waste with Food Management Best Practices,” will provide trainings, resources and market development support to implement food waste reduction, donation and diversion programs. The campaign will launch in January of 2014 and target food-handling operations in the four largest metropolitan areas of New Mexico: Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Rio Rancho and Santa Fe.

Nationally, the US Department of Agriculture and US Environmental Protection Agency recently launched a Food Waste Recovery Challenge, to lead a fundamental shift in how we think about and manage food and food waste in this country.

“This project aims to confront and provide solutions for these astounding concepts: Food waste is currently the single largest type of material entering our landfills, Americans throw away up to 40% of their food, while nearly 15% of US households don’t know where their next meals will come from. It’s time to feed people not landfills by working with businesses to properly divert food waste to become food for the hungry or to be composted into soil,” noted NMRC’s Executive Director, English Bird.

There are four program objectives: 1) Reduce food waste entering landfills; 2) Divert edible food scraps to feed the hungry; 3) Create compost to build healthy soils; and 4) Raise awareness amongst food-handling businesses of the value of beneficially managing their food scraps.

“At Walmart, we are committed to fighting hunger in the communities we serve,” said Scott Doepke, Vice President and Regional General Manager for Walmart. “The work being done by the New Mexico Recycling Coalition to manage and prevent food waste is ground-breaking and we believe that better management of consumable foods and reduction of waste is an important part of hunger relief efforts. We are proud to support the Recycling Coalition’s efforts in education and training to implement food waste reduction, donation and diversion programs.”

The grant will also help launch new collection businesses or assist municipalities to provide food waste collection services, utilizing nearly \$20,000 of grant funds to provide competitive sub-grants for food waste collection containers.

New Mexico Recycling Coalition is a non-profit member-supported organization with the mission of leading New Mexico to value waste as a resource. The organization serves as a recycling advocate working with a diverse group of stakeholders, communities, businesses, schools and grassroots activists to help build sustainable and efficient recycling programs. To learn more, visit www.recyclenewmexico.com.

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