

May 22, 2014

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Sarah Pierpont, NM Recycling Coalition, 505-603-0558 cell

## **New Mexico Recycling Coalition Awards Almost \$20,000 in Grant Funds.**

Santa Fe – As part of its plan to work with local businesses to promote and increase food waste diversion, The New Mexico Recycling Coalition (NMRC) awarded \$18,750 to three entities working to combat food waste in New Mexico.

Food waste is the single largest type of material entering our landfills. Americans throw away 40% of their food, yet nearly 15% of Americans don't know where their next meal will come from (EPA). With proper management, food waste can be channeled into the desired diversion hierarchy to first feed people, secondly feed animals and finally collected for compost to enrich soils and therefore grow more food.

“This funding will help support food-generating businesses and events to expand their options for wise food scrap management, thus reducing the amount of this material sent to the landfill,” noted NMRC’s Executive Director, English Bird. “The next phase of this program will be to develop resources and actively educate food handling entities on best practices of food scrap management - so we can see more donations to those in need and increase food scrap composting.”

Soilutions located in Albuquerque will receive \$8,908 to purchase collection equipment in order to expand their services. Soilutions is a full service company providing both pick up and processing of food scraps. They began collecting food waste from large and small businesses in 2008, and in 2013 collected and composted 2120 tons of food waste from Albuquerque, Rio Rancho and Bernalillo food waste generators.

Reunity Resources out of Santa Fe recently secured a public-private partnership with the City of Santa Fe to launch a pilot food scrap collections program last month. They will receive \$6,305 for collections handling equipment to assist with their efforts. In its first month of operations this pilot program secured nine clients and diverted 10.5 tons of food scrap from the landfill.

The third grantee is Knowaste, an Albuquerque-based organization that creates and manages Resource Recovery Stations for public events, which includes food scraps collections. NMRC awarded Knowaste \$3,537 for public collection stations. Not only do the stations divert material from landfills, they also serve as highly visible educational tools to help the public understand what is in the waste stream, what can be recycled and what can be composted. With volunteers and the Resource Recovery Stations, Knowaste sees diversion rates of approximately 78% at its events.

NMRC secured program funding through a generous \$50,000 grant from The Walmart Foundation’s State Giving Program. Aside from sub-awarding monies to the businesses mentioned above, 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.

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](http://www.recyclenewmexico.com).

###