

# Local Actions for Global Markets: Case Studies of New Mexico's Rural Recycling programs in the face of China's National Sword



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# NM's Rural Hubs and Spokes – where are we today?

Annual recycling tonnages at the ARRA-funded rural recycling hubs-Pre-National Sword

Year	Otero County - La Luz	NWNMRS WA - Thoreau	Las Vegas	Truth or Consequences	Deming	SWSWA - Silver City*	Raton	Estancia Valley SWA – Torrance*
2010	413.27	481.39	129.60	192.19	60.75	1,347	0.00	217.00
2011	317.69	460.76	187.49	266.10	150.85	1,794	0.00	241.00
2012	294.24	950.09	207.50	292.12	142.79	1,329	61.90	190.53
2013	436.42	771.81	210.78	382.37	173.00	1,504	166.23	202.32
2014	473.63	650.16	399.12	362.66	88.54	1,680	211.54	240.17
2015	563.34	755.59	390.59	361.52	89.61	1,676	201.05	334.27
2016	676.79	898.39	278.63	415.84	81.28	1,414	192.55	375.87

The decline in tons in 2016 in Silver City is attributed to the city discontinuing its glass recycling operations, collection equipment issues during the year and the lack of a shipment of recovered electronics (e-scrap is only sent to market from Silver City every 14-16 months). In addition, the City of Deming removed its green waste and scrap tire diversion programs in 2014, causing the tons of material recycled to be lower. However, the quality of the city's traditional household recyclable materials has improved in recent years thanks to public education efforts. Similarly, the City of Las Vegas experienced a reduction in tons recycled in 2016 because of equipment issues with a yard waste grinder – these problems were resolved later in the year.

\*Single Stream

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How did NM's system consistently boost tonnages, even amid market challenges?

- Production of high-quality, source separated material
- Development of strong relationships with end markets
- Establishing solid waste rates that helped pay for recycling operations
- Included cost avoidance when evaluating expenses
- Continued outside funding efforts to improve programs
- Increasing spoke locations and services (cardboard business collection)



*Above: New recycling container for additional spoke locations at area schools that will feed into the Thoreau Recycling Hub*

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**National Sword – all of the source separated hubs are operating as usual, the two single stream hubs have had to make adjustments, but are still recycling!**

- **Silver City** – May 2018 – town receives a surprise bill for \$4000 from Tucson MRF that processes their material. Prior to that the City received a check for the recyclables
  - June 2018 – The Tucson MRF informed the city they would no longer accept the Town's recyclables
  - July 2018 – After much searching and negotiations, the Town found a new outlet for their recyclables in El Paso at a cost of \$25 a ton. To cover the cost, the town raised the landfill fee for Silver City residents an additional 90 cents.
- **Estancia Valley SWA** – June 2018 – Announced it will no longer accept mixed paper and plastics, returning from single stream to source separated recycling of metal cans and cardboard only. Service almost 66,000 people.
  - Maintain detailed records of everything they do – easy to measure success. In 2017 collected 3372 tons of MSW, 194 tons of recycling, 163 tons of C7D, 20 tons of ash, 2974 gallons of oil, 63 lead acid batteries, 171 tons of brush and 4100 tires
  - EVSWA was recycling about 14-16 tons per month single stream, reduced to 7-8 tons per month. Has noticed increase in MSW going into landfill cells, however large storm event in July of 2018 that produced large volume of debris

	2017	2018
July (tons)	296	346
August (tons)	320	359

- Big success now is swap shop at their local transfer station/recycling center - donate large quantity of items each day, do not track tons, but it is very popular with the community

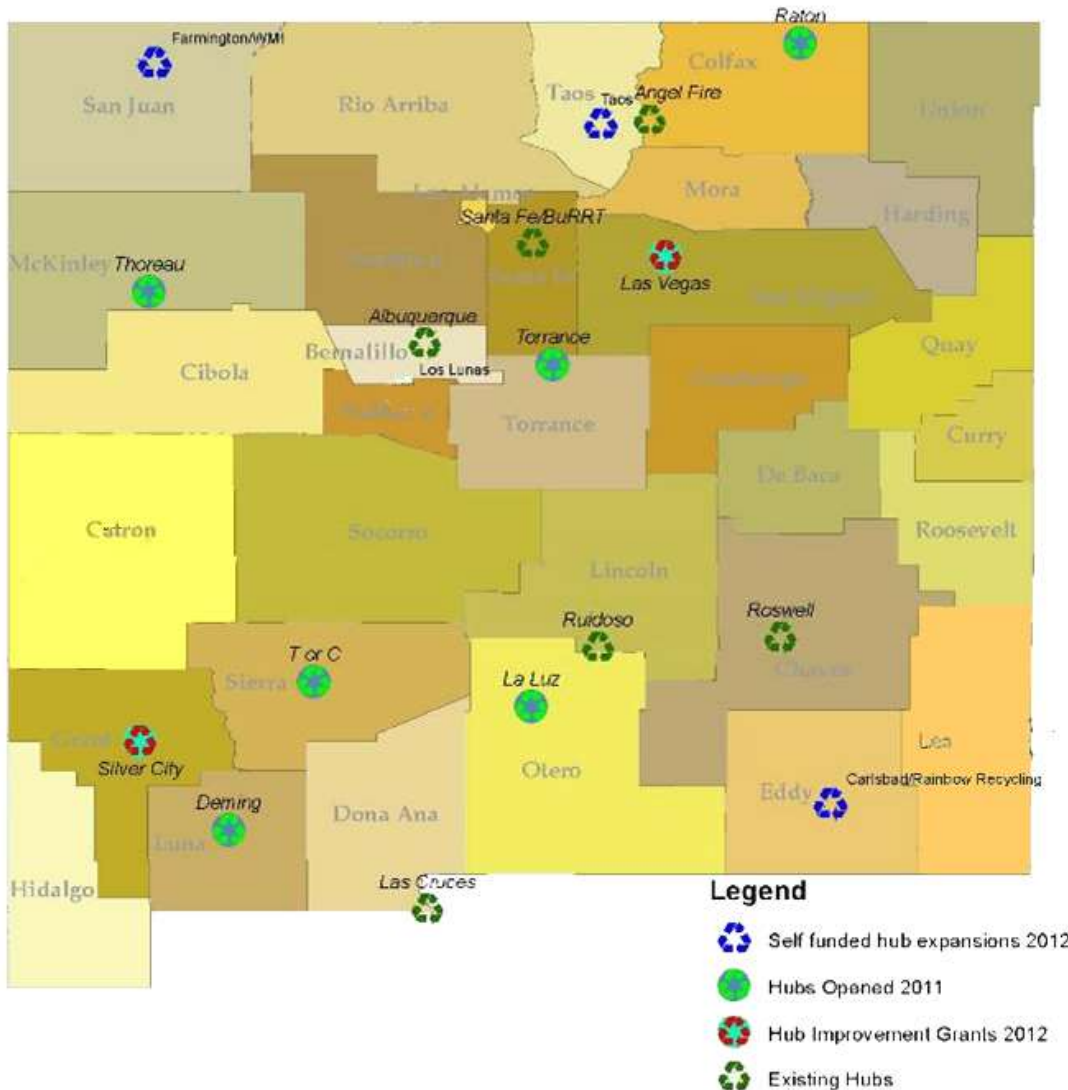
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- **RATON – Reported that the volume recycled this year compared to last year seems comparable despite a population loss in the City.** Hasn't had to move a plastics load yet since National Sword, like everyone else they saw big hit in paper pricing (moved it in March for \$5/ton) but getting a lot of assistance from volunteers that help with quality control, which helps to keep their operating costs down.
  - Biggest challenge is contaminated loads from unstaffed, drop-off station that is open 24-7.
  - Recently added new spoke at the large Vermijo Park Ranch that has already brought in over 100 trailers loads of cardboard and it is very clean. This summer they added plastic #1 and #2, mixed paper to the list of recyclables from the new spoke.
- **Alamogordo/Otero County** – Reports that volume is down this year compared to 2017, but this not due to low participation, but to the fact that loads were stored unprotected outside during a construction project and got contaminated
  - Maintains a long list of spokes that feed into the hub
  - Plastics #1 and #2 are comingled and currently has a load read to be sold
  - Building new building for solid waste (through two Colonia's Grants and GRT bond) which will be done this winter. New building and loading design will improve efficiencies and reduce the trips to the landfill by 400%. This will allow staff to have more time to focus on recycling. The new building will also include new recycling infrastructure, such as an aluminum and tin separator and conveyor for the recycling operations.



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New Mexico Hub and Spoke Recycling



**Thoreau/Red Rocks** – Secured state funding to build a new recycling building that will house their baler and conveyor and will increase their capacity. Continue to service 20+ hubs and have added additional hubs and area schools. Found new markets for their source separated materials. Control contamination by having spokes staffed or somewhat controlled like behind a locked fence at a school.

**Deming**– Still servicing drop off locations located throughout town. No longer servicing hubs in the County. Noticed slight increase in tonnage recently.