

2018 Recycling & Solid Waste Awards Announced

Albuquerque Area Recyclers Bring home two New Mexico Recycling Awards!

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sarah Pierpont, New Mexico Recycling Coalition Executive Director
505-603-0558 cell/sarah@recyclenewmexico.com

The New Mexico Recycling Coalition (NMRC) is pleased to announce the 2018 New Mexico Recycling winners. Since 2002 NMRC has recognized individuals, businesses and communities that work to reduce waste and support recycling and composting in New Mexico.

2018 New Mexico Recycling Coalition Award Winners:

- Diversion Project of the Year – **Los Alamos County Environmental Services**
- Recycling Facility Employee of the Year (Non-Management) – **Keysha Burton, South Central SW Authority**
- Collaborative Partnership Program of the Year – **Chamisal ReUse Center**
- Recycling/Composting Facility of the Year – **North West NM Regional Solid Waste Authority**
- Composting Facility Employee of the Year (Non-Management) – **Martin Lachuga**
- Recycler of the Year – **Duane Kinsley and employees of Sport Systems of Albuquerque**
- E. Gifford Stack Lifetime Achievement Award – **Miguel Silva from Las Cruces, NM (posthumously)**

The recycling awards were presented on September 25th at the New Mexico Recycling and Solid Waste Conference: Local Actions for Global Markets that took place at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown. The conference brought together over 200 individuals working in recycling and solid waste and representing rural and urban municipalities, counties, federal entities, universities, tribes, solid waste associations and businesses. Topics included best practices in both recycling and solid waste management, such as the reducing contamination at the curb and drop-off centers, development of domestic recycling markets, the evolving composition of recyclables and waste, safety, recycling as strategic planning, landfill gas management and more.

Highlights of Albuquerque Area Winners:

Composting Facility Employee of the Year (Non-Management) – Martin Lachuga

Martin Lachuga started working at Soilutions, a compost yard in the south valley that transforms yard debris and food waste into organic compost and mulch, in 2008. From the beginning he showed an aptitude for equipment work and a zeal for materials management. Recently, he has over taken the sole role of collecting food waste, and servicing those customers he's grown to call his own.

Mr. Lachuga is a certified compost facility operator with the New Mexico Environment Department: Solid Waste Bureau and is consistently identifying and implementing opportunities for improving operations. He has helped grow the food-scrap diversion program to 35 restaurants and businesses in Albuquerque that divert over 3300 tons of organic material each year from landfills. The material, then creates premium compost at Soilutions' compost yard. It is truly a closed-loop system in which the compost amends New Mexico's soils to help grow more food and complete the cycle.

Recycler of the Year – Duane Kinsley and employees of Sport Systems of Albuquerque

Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Repurpose and Recycle – these 6 R’s are part of the culture at Sport Systems, a local specialty sports store offering ski, snowboard, bike, hike, run and swim gear on Montgomery in Albuquerque.

Five years ago owner and team leader, Duane Kinsley (duane@nmsportssystem.com), asked his employees for their input as to how to further green the operations and was amazed with the ideas. Aside from traditional recycling of items, such as cardboard, mixed paper, plastic and metal cans, their long list of endeavors to reduce their waste includes: providing employees with reusable coffee cups and water bottles; repairing as many usable items, such as skis as possible for their equipment lease program or resale; giving new life to discarded items by transforming them into art or signs; collecting used athletic shoes for reuse; purchasing recycled-content items; and supplying local recycled-material jewelers with used bike parts.

Items that can’t be reused or repurposed in-store are donated to artists at Warehouse 508, a non-profit founded by Duane in 2009, to provide a venue for non-traditional sports and urban art experiences for Albuquerque’s youth (age 11-20). All of this savings has allowed Sports Systems to reduce the frequency of their trash pickup from three times to two times per week, with associated cost savings.

In 2014, the store proudly became carbon neutral by installing a 71 kW photovoltaic power system on their roof and they are currently working to create stationary bicycles that generate power. These will be used in-store initially, but there are plans to make them available for purchase. So the next time one of his team members wants to warm up their lunch packed in a reusable container, they’ll have to pedal hard to power the microwave.

Highlights of Los Alamos County Award Winners:

Diversion Project of the Year – Los Alamos County Environmental Services

Los Alamos has recently initiated a yard trimmings recovery and composting program utilizing curbside roll cart-based collection. The program provides residents with 96-gallon plastic roll carts, free of charge, in which they can collect leaves, grass trimmings, small branches, and other yard debris. These carts are collected bi-weekly by county Environmental Services (alternating with recycling pick-up, to reduce cost and increase efficiency), and brush is ground at the LA County Eco Station. Shredded material is made available to residents for use as mulch, composted with biosolids at the County’s wastewater treatment plant and returned for use as compost. Any excess material is handled by Soilutions Compost Facility of Albuquerque.

The program is already extremely popular with Los Alamos residents, with nearly 50% of households requesting roll carts. This is a spectacular increase over the 10% participation rate seen during the several years of the previous, quarterly pick-up program! As carts are being utilized and the community learns about the program, more and more residents are requesting carts. The county anticipates continued enthusiastic participation, with resulting high rates of diversion of yard trimmings from their landfill waste stream, and recovery of valuable brush material.

While popular nationwide, this approach to collection of brush material is not in widespread use in New Mexico, but represents an affordable, efficient, user-friendly and highly effective method to recover valuable compostable material. Diversion of this material saves landfill space, reduces greenhouse gas generation, and provides valuable amendments that can be used to improve New Mexico soils. It is also being used to help compost biosolids generated in the County's wastewater treatment plant, avoiding costly landfill disposal. Furthermore the program helps to reduce transportation costs to haul and dispose of yard trimmings at the Rio Rancho landfill which is approximately 90 miles away. A wonderful example of an innovative, win-win-win solution to a waste diversion problem!

Yard waste and brush makes up 14% of the County's solid waste. To date, 2,800 households have received yard trimming roll carts and 89.84 tons of yard trimming materials were collected in the month of July, this is enough to divert five truck loads of material from being sent to the Rio Rancho landfill. An additional 500 requests for yard trimming roll carts have been received. Environmental Services staff will continue to deliver yard trimming carts. To request a cart visit the yard trimming roll cart registration page at <https://www.losalamosnm.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=6435810&pageId=11109566> or contact the Environmental Services Division at 662-8163 or SolidWaste@lacnm.us

Solid Waste Innovative Project of the Year – Chamisa Elementary School-and Zero Waste Lunch Programs

Los Alamos County worked with Los Alamos Public Schools to create and sustain lunch recycling programs and Zero Waste Lunch Programs. This includes focusing on zero waste and the first two "Rs:" Reduce and Reuse, as well as Recycle.

The Green Team at Chamisa Elementary School in White Rock successfully deployed a Zero Waste Lunch Day and Zero Waste Lunch Week. Students created a homemade video to educate the student body and teachers on how to pack a zero waste lunch. Donated raffle prizes were awarded to those who participated and prizes consisted of BPA free reusable snack containers or water bottles. Over 60% of the students participated in the Zero Waste Lunch Day and 40% participated in the Zero Waste Lunch Week.

Due to this success, Los Alamos County worked with Chamisa to expand this program to the community and other Los Alamos schools. Using funds from an New Mexico Environment Department: Recycling and Illegal Dumping Grant, Los Alamos County and Chamisa Elementary Green Team developed an educational "How to Pack A Zero Waste Lunch" video that is being screened at the local movie theatre for one year.

The Zero Waste Lunch challenge has also been adopted by other schools in the district, the video is also on YouTube and can be used by other schools or communities. The video brings awareness to the community about the importance of waste minimization and tips to prepare a zero waste lunch for school or work.

The Green Team Chair is third grade teacher, Megan Lee (m.lee@laschools.net). To see Chamisa Elementary's video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9plpDTGzGU>. Chamisa's green team received a \$200 donation from the New Mexico Recycling Coalition and from the Solid Waste Association of North America – New Mexico Chapter to help purchase items for their zero waste lunch program, such as compost bins or signs reminding students to pack zero waste lunches.

Highlights of Recycling Facility of the Year Winner: North West New Mexico Regional Solid Waste Authority (NWNMRSWA)

This recycling hub in McKinley County, New Mexico is an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funded hub and spoke system that began in early 2012 and the program kicked off with record high recycling that year. The recycling center (hub) and landfill at Thoreau is operated by the Northwest New Mexico Regional Solid Waste Authority (NWNMRSWA), which services Cibola and McKinley Counties and is fed by over 20 spoke locations, all of which are staffed to control contamination issues. NWNMRSWA collects source separated material, but has comingled plastic #1 and #2 plastics, for ease of operations. Recently the Solid Waste Authority has added additional collection sites to its program, providing containers to local schools and received a 2016 RAID grant to purchase collection containers for the University of New Mexico's Gallup campus.

NWNMRSWA is managed by Billy Moore and Gary Ford. Under their leadership, they have been able to expand their services, secured state funding to build a new building to house their baler, and partner with their neighboring McKinley Paper to develop new relationships/markets for not only their cardboard and mixed paper, but also their plastics. They have increased the amount of money received for their material over the past year by developing this relationship and continuing to produce high quality bales of recyclables. This is all despite the current market challenges brought on by China's recent ban on imported scrap material earlier this year.

The commitment from Billy Moore, Gary Ford and the solid waste authority to provide recycling services to their residents is a key component of their success.

Highlights of Las Cruces Area Winners:

Tarkeysha Burton, South Central Solid Waste Authority - Recycling Facility Employee of the Year AND Solid Waste Employee of the Year (Non-Management):

It is rare for an individual to earn recognition for both Solid Waste and Recycling Employee of the year, but Ms. Burton is an ever-busy proponent of recycling and solid waste best-management practices, such as illegal dumping abatement. As the Recycling coordinator for South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) she utilizes her expertise to create outreach programs, work to end illegal dumping in the region, find markets for recyclables and coordinate a wide-range of special projects. She manages over 300 commercial and 32,000 curbside recycling accounts in the City of Las Cruces.

On any given day Ms. Burton approves all communication regarding recycling in her community, posts recycling updates on social media and the SCSWA web page, and answers numerous calls from area residents concerning

recycling. She cosponsors and tables at local community events with Keep Dona Ana County Beautiful and coordinates multi-community clean up events each month.

Her list of accomplishments includes developing a comprehensive, teacher recycling resource guide, complete with curriculum and lesson plans that align with public school standards and establishing the Green Ladies, a group of professional women that plan, coordinate and put on sustainable community events.

On a statewide level she is working to take the successful illegal dumping abatement program from Dona Ana County to other parts of the state. The workshop will take place in Grants this fall to help McKinley and Cibola counties with their illegal dumping issues.

Sarah Pierpont, Executive Director of the New Mexico Recycling Coalition, noted that, “Keysha Burton is a recycling-force to be reckoned with. She’s just as comfortable giving a professional presentation on how to best design an effective outreach campaign as she is getting silly with a group of 4th graders while she teaches them how to recycle-right. New Mexico is truly lucky to have her in our state as an advocate to promote reducing, reusing and recycling.”

Burton is the Secretary of the Board for the New Mexico Recycling Coalition.

Miguel Silva from Las Cruces, NM (posthumously) – E. Gifford Stack Lifetime Achievement Award AND Terry Nelson Lifetime Achievement Awards

Former Las Cruces City Councilor Miguel Silva was awarded the E. Gifford Stack and the Terry Nelson Lifetime achievement awards, posthumously for pioneering the recycling program in Las Cruces. Miguel and the Silva family operated a small waste collection company in Southern New Mexico and Eastern Arizona until it was purchased by Waste Connections in the early 2000s.

Miguel worked in the family business for 25 years and kept the small hauler in mind when making policy decisions that could affect them. As part of his City Council duties Miguel served on the SCSWA board as chair or vice chair for eight years. As Chair he was engaged, and demanded monthly meeting with the Director to review board agendas and provide guidance and insight on issues and projects.

He was instrumental in bring curbside recycling to the City of Las Cruces, and developed the business model for the small community collection facilities currently being adopted today in Dona Ana County. Miguel loved the waste business and proudly had the nickname of “Basura Man.” He was also the first recycling coordinator employed by the City of Las Cruces, and responsible for the creation of the recycling road runner sculpture that welcomes travelers to the City.

Today the Silva Sanitation legacy continues, while Miguel was a second generation trash man Matthew Whelan, his nephew was recently named as the Director of Solid Waste Management for the City of Albuquerque, a third generation trash man. Matthew Whelan accepted the award on his Uncle’s behalf and delighted attendees with stories about his Uncle’s dedication to diversion and pride in solid waste operations.

Patrick Peck, Director of the South Central Solid Waste Authority, noted that, “I knew Miguel for 25 years and miss his presence in my life daily. I can think of no award he would cherish more greatly than this and I believe it pays tribute to the man, his family, and their continued impact on the waste business in New Mexico.”

South Central Solid Waste Authority Chaparral Collection Center - Solid Waste Facility of the Year

The Chaparral Community Collection Center opened in May of 2017 and services the 25,000 residents of the unincorporated community of Chaparral in both Dona Ana and Otero Counties. It offers recycling and household hazardous waste drop off services, green waste and scrap tire drop off as well as municipal solid waste (MSW) transfer services.

Key to this project was the community engagement and employment preference given to area residents. The community has two very active community groups, the Chaparral Improvement Group and the Chaparral Community Development group. SCSWA staff attends these regular meetings and works with the community to solve their waste management needs. An example is the waste and litter left after the 4th of July celebration. Many Texas residents come to Chaparral and celebrate the 4th of July and New Mexico's fireworks. After the celebration the community is left with spent fireworks all over the place. SCSWA now provides dumpsters during the holiday and works with community members to clean up the litter.

Staff at the facility come from the community, as there is a hiring preference given to applicants living within 15 miles of the collection center. Of the six staff members, four are from Chaparral and two are from Anthony. Additionally, SCSWA pays all of their employees' wages based on the City of Las Cruces minimum wage requirements. SCSWA's internal minimum wage is \$10.46 per hour.

SCSWA produced 4 Community Connections newsletter in the community through Eco Partners to inform the community of issues concerning illegal dumping, waste management, and recycling.

The key to the facility is that it was designed to not only manage MSW from individual residents but also from commercial haulers. The revenue generated from the commercial haulers pays for the facility and staff while the community gets the benefits of having a full service collection center open 7 days a week.

SCSWA has an excellent record of NMED compliance and has the highest safety rating of any municipality in the state. In 2018 SCSWA was recognized by SWANA for safety program at WASTECON, and in 2017 SCSWA won the Community Recycling Program of the Year from the National Recycling Coalition.

Your Part

By recycling, you play a critical role in supporting jobs, assisting in economic growth, conserving energy and natural resources, as well as ensuring a higher quality of life for future generations. It's your job to "recycle right" – that means only putting items into your curbside or drop off recycling carts that your community accepts. Find out what items are recyclable in the Albuquerque area and download the "Recycle Coach" app at <https://www.cabq.gov/solidwaste/recycling>. Never bag your recyclables, this means never putting any sort of plastic bag in your curbside or drop off recycling carts, including trash bags! These items are considered "tanglers" and wrap around the equipment at the recycling plant and cause the plant to shut down to clean out their equipment. Plastic bags can be recycled at retail locations, but not in your curbside cart. To find a retail location that accepts plastic bags near you, visit <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/recycling-bags-and-wraps/find-drop-off-location/>

About New Mexico Recycling Coalition

New Mexico Recycling Coalition is a non-profit, member-supported organization with the mission of inspiring New Mexicans to reduce, reuse and recycle. The organization serves as a recycling advocate



PO Box 24364 • Santa Fe, NM • 87502 • 575-224-2630

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.

###