

# CURBSIDE RECYCLING!



About 20 years ago the McKinley Citizens' Recycling Council discussed the possibility of Curbside Recycling with the City of Gallup. A Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments study was conducted and at that time it was decided the program would not be feasible due to the level of participation and cost.

We are now in a new century and attitudes about recycling have changed. It is the "smart" thing for communities to do, in fact, because of other cost factors: (1) the high cost of creating a new landfill cell for our trash [.5 million], (2) higher cost for transporting that trash to the Red Rocks Landfill in Thoreau [fuel and personnel], and (3) tipping fees paid on the amount of trash generated by the citizens of Gallup and deposited in the landfill - these factors have made Curbside Recycling a more attractive option.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average American produces about 4.4 pounds of garbage a day, or a total of 29 pounds per week and 1,600 pounds a year. These are the numbers for the average household member and does not account for industrial waste or commercial trash. Staggering statistics. While the numbers may be difficult to grasp, consider this: with the garbage produced in America alone, you could form a line of garbage trucks and reach the moon. Or cover the state of Texas two and a half times. Or bury more than 990,000 football fields under six-foot high piles of waste. According to Waste Management Recycle America, Americans alone throw away enough

[aluminum](#) to duplicate the full commercial air fleet of the US!

Our overly consumptive lifestyle combined with an overly compulsive need to just throw stuff away has filled our landfills with items that are highly reusable and recyclable. Recycling, along with reducing and reusing the trash we produce, is an important component in the effort to preserve our natural resources and reduce environmental pollution.

And believe it or not, there are still people who don't recycle. It's been almost 25 years since the three Rs came to stand for Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, but we're still producing too much personal waste. It is time to add a 4<sup>th</sup> R – Responsibility, and a 5<sup>th</sup> R – Respect (for Mother Earth).

### **What does curbside recycling require?**

Before any program would start, much study would be needed by City Solid Waste and elected officials to determine how, what, and when materials could be collected. For the citizen the basic requirements to ensure best service, safety and health would include, for example:

- placing all materials on curb no later than 7 am on your scheduled trash pick-up day.
- making sure recyclables are clearly recognizable and accessible at the curb.
- ensuring that each bag or tub weighs less than 50 pounds – no overloading.
- putting recyclables at the curb, 5 feet away from your automated trash cart.
- placing only clean recyclable materials in designated bags or tubs.

The McKinley Citizens' Recycling Council is taking an informal survey to gauge the community's opinion on the viability of Curbside Recycling. Curbside collection may require an additional charge of up to \$5 dollars to your utility bill. Give us your opinion. Respond by going to the MCRC web page ([recyclegallup.org](http://recyclegallup.org)) and click on Contact Us to respond.

***Would you be willing to pay up to \$5 more on your city utility bill to cover the cost of the convenience of Curbside Recycling?***

Across New Mexico 15 communities participate in Curbside Recycling. Gallup could make it #16!