

CURBSIDE RECYCLING – What it Could Mean for Gallup

Recycling and particularly Curbside Recycling 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 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. A cost savings that can add dollars to recycling and solid waste infrastructure.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average American produces about 4.4 pounds of garbage a day, a total of 29 pounds per week and 1,600 pounds a year. These numbers do not account for industrial waste or commercial trash. Staggering statistics. While the numbers may be difficult to grasp, look at it this way - the garbage produced in the USA 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 can be reused, repurposed, and recycled. 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.

For over 25 years the 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) have been the catch words for growing a green movement, but we're still producing too much personal waste. It is time to add a 4th R – Responsibility, and a 5th R – Respect (for Mother Earth).

The discussion of a Curbside Recycling Program for residents began over 20 years ago. In 2013 MCRC initiated an informal survey to calculate interest in curbside recycling and what amount citizens would pay for the service. 142 responded positively and committed to paying up to \$5 extra. *People were interviewed randomly or they responded online through CREDO.

(*Many of those interviewed stated they would support a curbside program and an additional fee even though they already subsidized solid waste by having their

dumpster emptied only once a month, or less. *When you recycle your true trash volume shrinks considerably.*)

The City hired a consultant to conduct 6 surveys in the past year. Two informal and four district wide to gauge citizens' support of curbside. Good questions were raised. Concerns were discussed. The City then initiated another survey. In your City Utility bill you will find a postcard asking citizens to indicate their support, or not, of a curbside program and if in favor what additional fee would you be willing to pay. Though the initial program would only effect approximately 6500 residents the survey was sent to all City utility customers. Businesses and individuals living in apartments / mobile homes would not be part of the program.

What would a Curbside Program mean for citizens of Gallup?

- *Increased volume in recycled materials would further reduce tipping fees at the landfill providing additional funds for infrastructure and improvements.
- *Reduce congestion at the bins at the three recycling centers.
- *City residents will be instructed in the proper way to prepare recyclables for market, reducing contamination and increasing their value.
- *A curbside program will show new residents that Gallup is a progressive city in this 15th year of the 21st century that is concerned about reducing its carbon footprint: recycling saves water, energy, and other natural resources.
- *Initiation of a Curbside Recycling Program will show leadership and forward thinking in our elected officials and City administration.

Across New Mexico 15 communities participate in Curbside Recycling.
Let's make Gallup #16!

McKinley Citizens' Recycling Council (MCRC) is a local non-profit working to increase recycling through education, community outreach, and partnership with local governments/agencies.

MCRC meets the first Saturday of the month at 2pm at Red Mesa on Hill Street. For more information call 722-5142 or go to www.recyclegallup.org