

New Mexico Recycling Coalition – Annual Meeting
May 28, 2026 – Albuquerque, New Mexico
Ventana Salon at the Albuquerque Museum ~ 2000 Mountain Road NW

8:00 – 8:30 Registration and Coffee Networking

Morning Session: Local examples of rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle

Presentations as outlined below, followed by a question-and-answer session.

8:30 – 9:00 Single Use Plastic Ban Impacts in New Mexico: Bernalillo County Case Study

Speaker: Sarah Pierpont, Executive Director of the New Mexico Recycling Coalition

Through state funding, NMRC collaborated with Bernalillo County to assess the impacts on local businesses of Ordinance 2019-15, which bans single-use plastic bags and single-use polystyrene food containers from retail establishments. This comprehensive study includes survey results from businesses affected by the ordinance and recommendations for updates and improvements.

9:00 – 9:45 Retired Windmill Blades: Shifting from Burden to Opportunity in Estancia Valley

Speaker: Danette Cabber, Executive Director of the Estancia Valley Solid Waste Authority

The Estancia Valley Solid Waste Authority operates a regional landfill and provides recycling, solid waste, composting, transfer station and collection center services to residents in Torrance County. In 2020, the Vaughn landfill accepted approximately 250, 40-foot-long wind turbine blades from a nearby project. After five years of research, expense, and a notice of violation from the state before the windmill blades were finally processed and buried at the landfill. The number of end-of-life wind turbine blades in our state is poised to increase significantly, and within a 120-mile radius of EVSWA's landfill, there are 1,382 planned or developed wind turbines. Attendees will learn details about EVSWA's experience and plans to ultimately build a recycling facility to proactively address this issue.

9:45 – 10:15 City of Carlsbad Recycling Feasibility Study

Speakers: Mary Garwood, City of Carlsbad City Councilor and Keep Carlsbad Beautiful Coordinator and Sean Henderson, Senior Consultant at NewGen Strategies and Solutions, LLC

The City of Carlsbad has experienced extensive population growth over the past ten years with the boom of the Permian Basin oil reserves. This meant a rapidly growing and ever-changing population that happened to coincide with an abrupt end to the City's recycling operations due to market issues, lack of infrastructure and funding needs. The desire to restart recycling resulted in a comprehensive feasibility study and the City's partnership with NewGen Strategies and Solutions, a consulting firm deeply familiar with solid waste and recycling management operations in the state. This presentation will outline the results of that study, possible solutions and paths forward for this southern New Mexico town of 32,000.

10:15 – 10:30 Coffee Break

10:30 – 11:00 Expanded Organics Diversion Programming at Soilutions

Speaker: Dawn Dewey, is an active owner and project manager at Soilutions, the largest privately owned compost company in New Mexico and one of the only women-owned compost companies in the country. *Soilutions, located in the South Valley of Albuquerque, focuses on diverting organic waste from landfills and transforming it into premium, all-natural gardening products that actively restore soil health and replenish the environment. After driving significant growth for three years, in 2024, Soilutions doubled down on efforts to innovate, introduce new technologies, and improve processes to make composting faster, more efficient, and even more beneficial to the environment. From speeding up the composting process to finding new ways to engage businesses in sustainability, Soilutions is constantly evolving to continue scaling and further its impact. Learn how this operation recently helped to increase food waste entering New Mexico landfills by 600% within the last year and what they plan to do in the future to continue that growth and diversion.*

11:00 – 12:00 Access to Recycling in New Mexico: Funding Opportunities Panel

Discussion

Speakers Matthew Gretton, Environmental Scientist and Specialist, New Mexico Environment Department Resource Recovery Bureau; Chantal Sandoval, Clean and Beautiful Program Manager, New Mexico Tourism Department; Abraham Tueme De La Pena, Sustainability Director, Arca Continental Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages

This panel of speakers will discuss opportunities to secure and leverage state and private funding to help build and remain waste diversion programs, these include New Mexico Tourism Department Grants, Recycling Circular Economy and Illegal Dumping Grants and private business efforts. Attendees will learn about the types of projects funded in the past and how they can utilize these opportunities to help build their programs.

12:00 – 1:00 Networking Lunch

Lunch is provided and will be facilitated with interactive discussion prompts so that attendees can share and learn from others in attendance. What programs and policies from the morning presentations could you implement in your community?

Afternoon Session: Statewide examples of rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle

Presentations as outlined below, followed by a question-and-answer session.

1:00 - 2:00 Circular Economy Initiatives from around the Country

Speaker: Sarah Pierpont, Executive Director of the New Mexico Recycling Coalition

Circular Economy is a ubiquitous phrase lately, but what does it really mean when put into action at the state level? In this presentation, attendees will learn a summary of programs, projects and activities from around the country that work towards building systems in which discards return into the economy through true circularity. What lessons learned or initiatives have other states adopted that could work in New Mexico?

2:00 – 3:00 Sneak Peek at the Updated New Mexico Solid Waste Plan

Speaker: Shirlene Sitton, Bureau Chief, NMED: Resource Recovery Bureau

The Resource Recovery Bureau at the New Mexico Environment Department is required to author a statewide Solid Waste Management plan per state statute. The Solid Waste Management Plan guides decision-making around solid waste and recycling statewide. The last statewide plan is from 2015. Through strong leadership and funding from an

EPA SWIFR grant the state has contracted with a third party to conduct a comprehensive study, with significant stakeholder input, to generate a relevant and up-to-date plan. This includes an updated waste characterization study and recycling rates for New Mexico. Attendees will learn plans for short- and long-term goals in the areas of waste characterization, diversion, facilities, education, funding, and environmental justice.

3:00 – 3:30 Rate Study at NMED’s Resource Recovery Bureau

Speaker: Dave Yanke, Partner, NewGen Strategies and Solutions, LLC

Rates for solid waste management in New Mexico were last set in the 1990s and many of the goals and programs outlined in the updated Solid Waste Plan require funding. The NM Environment Department recently commissioned a study from NewGen Strategies and Solutions to outline existing funding structures and explore potential funding mechanisms and opportunities within the state. This could include pass through tip-fees, increases to permitting amounts, extended producer responsibility programs, etc. Learn more about potential funding opportunities, how they work in other states and which opportunities could help New Mexico recyclers and solid waste managers meet their goals.

3:30 – 4:30 Stakeholder Work: What do Boots-On-the-Ground NM Recyclers Envision for the Future Circular Economy of New Mexico?

The final discussion of the day will include a facilitated working group to determine potential paths forward for New Mexico to reduce waste, build a true circular economy in the state, and improve operational efficiencies within the recycling and solid waste arena. What strategies from the updated Solid Waste Management Plan stood out to you as priorities? What steps should our state take to reach its short-term and long-term goals? Attendees will work to find ways in which a circular economy can work in the state and timelines for progress and implementation.