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Environment Department Awards ‘Hub and Spoke’ Recycling Infrastructure Grants to Three New Mexico Communities

(Santa Fe, N.M.) The New Mexico Environment Department recently awarded three ‘Hub and Spoke’ infrastructure grants to help the cities of Raton, Gallup, and Truth or Consequences with recycling projects.

Those communities will receive recycling processing equipment, collection containers for nearby areas, technical assistance, safety training, and education and outreach development.

“These grants provide recycling infrastructure in communities throughout New Mexico that did not have access to recycling or were being underserved by existing recycling opportunities,” said New Mexico Environment Department Deputy Secretary Sarah Cottrell. “This program will increase access to recycling opportunities in rural communities of our state.”

The communities will report to the department the jobs that were created or saved through the program and the amount of recyclables collected. The department will then convert that information into energy and BTU savings.

The New Mexico Environment Department received a \$497,000 grant from the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department in 2009 for the projects. This grant award, which required a competitive bid process and approvals from the federal government, was part of the federal Department of Energy’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The New Mexico Environment Department partnered with the New Mexico Recycling Coalition on the program. The premise of the ‘Hub and Spoke’ recycling model is that there is a centralized processing center, or “hub” for recyclables where material is processed and sold to market. The “spokes” are surrounding communities that then feed their material into the hub. That model creates economies of scale so that rural areas do not need to invest in duplicative recycling infrastructure and can instead focus on collecting the recyclables and then transporting to the hub. The regionalized hubs also serve to reduce long-haul transport for remote areas of the state.

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