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New Mexico Recycling Coalition Awarded USDA Solid Waste Management Grant to Assist Eligible Tribes

Santa Fe, NM – The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development program awarded \$40,000 to the New Mexico Recycling Coalition (NMRC) as part of the Solid Waste Management grant program. The “Tribal Recycling Program Assistance and Training” project will launch a one-year grant program in October 2015 to provide technical assistance and trainings to 20 eligible New Mexico tribes.

New Mexico Rural Development Director Terry Brunner explained, “The Rural Utilities Solid Waste Management program is designed to support rural communities with populations of 10,000 or fewer. We are pleased to support the NM Recycling Coalition as it endeavors to support the increase of recycling and diversion within New Mexico’s tribal communities through technical assistance, training and resources.”

The project was developed based on initial outreach by NMRC to tribal communities over the past few years. NMRC found that many challenges hinder how tribes are able to launch or expand their diversion programs. One challenge has been the transition of how federal funds are able to assist tribes in their solid waste management programs. Another challenge is the rural nature of the state.

“NMRC plans to assist tribes with many of the same tactics we used in other parts of the state to increase access to recycling using the hub and spoke model,” explains Sarah Pierpont, NMRC Interim Executive Director. “Approaches outlined in this project include providing on-site trainings hosted at tribal collection centers, developing and sharing resources for tribes to use for self-sustaining solid waste funding mechanisms and conducting waste audits to better understand the tribal waste stream.”

Targeted tribal communities were selected based on the grant program eligibility criteria, which focuses on providing service to communities with 10,000 or fewer residents. Rural communities selected as targets for assistance include Jicarilla Apache Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Ohkay Owingeh, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Cochiti, Pueblo of Isleta, Pueblo of Jemez, Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Nambe, Pueblo of Picuris, Pueblo of Pojoaque, Pueblo of San Felipe, Pueblo of San Ildefonso, Pueblo of Sandia, Pueblo of Santa Ana, Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Pueblo of Taos, Pueblo of Tesuque, Pueblo of Zia and Pueblo of Zuni.

The project will initially reach out to the targeted communities to introduce the program and offer technical assistance. One to two waste audits will be conducted to better understand the solid waste stream generated in these tribal communities. Resources and content for Spring 2016 trainings will be designed to suit the needs of the targeted tribal communities and will incorporate best practices established from tribes around the nation as well as in New Mexico. NMRC will work with in-kind partner, the New Mexico Environment Department: Solid Waste Bureau, to achieve the goals of the grant.

About New Mexico Recycling Coalition

NMRC is a non-profit member-supported organization with the mission of leading New Mexico to value waste as a resource. The organization serves as a recycling advocate working with a diverse group of stakeholders, communities, businesses, schools and grassroots activists to help build sustainable and efficient recycling programs. www.recyclenewmexico.com.

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