

## **RECYCLING UPDATE: NEW BALER AND SINGLE-STREAM PROCESSING BOOST LOCAL RECYCLING PROGRAM**

by Terry Timme, Recycling Planner, Office of Sustainability, Town of Silver City

In 2012 the Town of Silver City was awarded a grant for over \$195,000 from the New Mexico Recycling Coalition in order to make improvements in the recycling center operated outside of Silver City by the Southwest Solid Waste Authority. This grant was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act administered by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Major upgrades have included a new automated baler, which compacts cardboard collected from local sources into bales of about 1200 pounds each. The bales are subsequently sold and made into recycled paper products. The baler is also being used to compact "single stream" recyclables in order to save transportation costs. After compaction the materials are hauled to Tucson and sold to a recovery facility operated by ReCommunity Recycling. At this location the recyclables are sorted using high-tech, computer-controlled equipment that can process 25 tons each hour with minimal sorting by hand. Each purified recycling stream is then baled and sent on for further reprocessing.

Residents of Grant County currently are recycling about 70 tons each month using single stream collection in curbside bins as well as metal roll-off containers placed around the area. Baling now allows twice as much material to be carried per truckload to the facility in Tucson. The savings is significant. For example, during the fourth quarter of 2012 over 3800 transportation miles were saved compared to the transporting of non-baled materials, which was SSWA's previous mode of delivery.

Single stream recycling is remarkably easy. Only glass, now ground up for use locally in road construction, must for safety reasons be physically separated from the rest of the recyclables. Residents and businesses simply place clean items in curbside bins or drop them off at specified locations (for a list of the latter, see the recycling page at [www.grantcountynm.com](http://www.grantcountynm.com)). Food containers that are too greasy or not easily cleaned should be thrown away as they pose a problem for our processor.

Accepted recyclables in Grant County now include all types of paper products (including newspapers, magazines, soda and beer boxes, junk mail, juice cartons, and the foil-lined containers called tetra-paks). Aluminum and tin cans are recycled, too. Most plastics are acceptable if they are stamped with the recycling numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, or 7 (this excludes Styrofoam). Plastic bags may also be recycled but because they tend to blow away easily, it is recommended that these be taken in combination to designated recycling bins inside the entrances to local groceries and Walmart. Better yet, bring your own reusable bags to stores when you shop. Remember, it's about reducing and reusing as well as recycling.

A final reminder: In Silver City you can recycle your unbroken CFL bulbs at Ace Hardware and your unwanted cellphones at Cellular Connection. Donations to the latter benefit El Refugio, a nonprofit shelter for women and children in Silver City. Learn more about the Office of Sustainability at [http://www.townofsilvercity.org/r/town\\_of\\_silver\\_city\\_NM.php?r=75,gxtwq](http://www.townofsilvercity.org/r/town_of_silver_city_NM.php?r=75,gxtwq)



SSWA BALER AT WORK COMPRESSING CARDBOARD FOR RECYCLING AT THE LANDFILL SOUTHWEST OF SILVER CITY. (JEFF WHITKAMP PHOTO)



THOUSANDS OF POUNDS OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT WERE RECYCLED DURING THE 2012 EARTH DAY E-WASTE EVENT IN SILVER CITY. ANOTHER SUCH COLLECTION EVENT WILL BE HELD ON APRIL 20 THIS YEAR AT THE SAME LOCATION, ACROSS FROM GOUGH PARK. OTHER RECYCLABLES WILL ALSO BE COLLECTED (TERRY TIMME PHOTO)

### **THANK YOU! GRIP ON-LINE FUNDRAISING SUCCESS VIA RAZOO.COM**

Late last year GRIP launched a fundraising challenge via [razoo.com](http://razoo.com), an innovative on-line platform that facilitates giving to more than a million registered nonprofit organizations. Using the website's virtually seamless and user-friendly interface, which allows for secure credit card and PayPal contributions, two dozen donors quickly met the GRIP board's requested match of \$1000. Several donors posted supportive comments via [razoo](http://razoo.com) and one even registered as a "fan" of GRIP. The site also posts images and background information about our organization and its activities. You can make your own donation to us at any time by clicking onto the GRIP page at <http://www.razoo.com/story/Gila-Resources-Information-Project>.

We appreciate your support!

