

## **ANSWERS ON SANDOVAL COUNTY'S NEW RESIDENTIAL TRASH PICKUP SERVICE**

Starting January 1, 2018, only one company will be authorized to pick up residential waste in most unincorporated areas of Sandoval County. The Placitas area is the lone exception.

Universal Waste Systems of New Mexico was granted exclusive rights to pick up and haul residential waste in the rest of unincorporated Sandoval County under a contract approved by the Sandoval County Commission on August 10, 2017.

County officials realize this is a change for many residents who have grown accustomed to having a different company picking up their trash. However, they also expect this arrangement to ultimately benefit all county residents by extending trash pick-up service to many residents who could not previously get such service and addressing issues of illegal dumping of trash around the county.

Here are answers to many of the questions county officials have received regarding this new arrangement:

**Question:** I'm happy with my current trash pickup service. Why is the county forcing me to use a different company?

**Answer:** The County realizes that many residents were happy with the service they received from trash hauling companies they had signed on with individually. However, under this completely free market system, many county residents were not able to get trash pick-up service because no company would service the part of the county in which they lived. There is evidence to show that this situation not only caused a hardship for those residents, it also contributed to the problem of illegal trash dumping around the county. This new agreement requires Universal Waste Systems to pick up trash from any county resident who wants that service. It also requires the company to address illegal dumping by offering dumpsters for community clean-up days and cleaning up illegal dumpsites identified by the county.

**Question:** What legal authority does the County have to allow only one company to pick up trash?

**Answer:** New Mexico law, specifically, Statute NMSA 1978 4-56-3 (D) states, "The board of county commissioners may determine that the collection and disposal of refuse is in the interest of public health, safety and welfare, and regulate such collection and disposal within the county." The county commission feels that the problem of illegal dumping is an issue of health, safety and welfare, and thus decided to act in accordance with this state statute.

**Question:** How much will Universal Waste Systems charge for trash pickup?

**Answer:** Universal Waste Systems will charge \$23.90 per month for weekly trash pickup for any residence in unincorporated Sandoval County, regardless of location. The contract with the county runs for seven years, and the price will not change during the term of the contract.

**Question:** I didn't know about this until my current trash hauler sent a notice saying they would no longer be able to serve me. Why wasn't there advance notice of this change?

**Answer:** The County worked on securing a contract for residential trash service for more than a year. Representatives from the County's Public Works Department held a series of community meetings last January to inform residents of this impending change, and to gather their opinions on the process. The dates and locations of those meetings were posted on the County's website and social media channels. Flyers also were distributed to community centers across the county. Here is the schedule of when those meetings were held.

PLACE	DATE	TIME
County Fairgrounds 37 Rodeo Dr. Cuba, NM 87103	January 23, 2017	6:00 p.m. To 7:00 p.m.
Jemez Senior Center 8154 Highway 4 Canon, NM 87024	January 24, 2017	6:00 p.m. To 7:00 p.m.
Placitas Senior Center 41 Camino de Las Huertas Placitas NM, 87043	January 25, 2017	6:00 p.m. To 7:00 p.m.
Pena Blanca Recreation Center and Library 778 Highway 22 Pena Blanca, NM 87041	January 26, 2017	6:00 p.m. To 7:00 p.m.

**Question:** I have heard that the collection centers will be closed?

**Answer:** Universal Waste Systems will be taking over the management of the collection centers. There will be no increase in fees and they will be open the same number of days each week as they are currently.

**Question:** I have not heard from Universal Waste Services. If they're supposed to be my new trash collection company why haven't they contacted me?

**Answer:** Universal Waste Systems is in the process of contacting all county residents to inform them of their services. If you have not heard from them yet, you can contact the company at:

Universal Waste Systems of New Mexico  
P.O. Box 45958  
Rio Rancho, NM 87174-5958  
1-505-377-8833 (local)  
1-855-897-6366  
Email: [service@uwsnm.com](mailto:service@uwsnm.com)  
Website: [www.uwsnm.com](http://www.uwsnm.com)

You also can direct questions to the County's Public Works Department at 505-771-8500.