



How Well Does Eldorado Recycle?

While the City of Santa Fe has been trying to increase its recycling rate from 10% to the national average of over 30% many U.S. cities do a lot better than the average - 70% and more. So how do we in the Eldorado area stack up? Many of us employ Waste Management Inc. (WMI) to pick up both trash and recyclables at curbside, others haul their trash and recyclables to the nearby Eldorado Convenience Center.

Waste Management Customers

WMI reports that in Eldorado 72% of homes use their weekly curbside trash and recycling service. WMI estimated in 2011 a recycling rate of 10% for the homes using their waste service. This was before the county mandated combined trash and recycling service and only half of WMI's customers paid for recycling. Under the new county law the rate should at least double for WMI customers, to 20%.

Recycling and Diversion Rates at the ECC

Santa Fe County weighs all recyclable and landfill materials it collects. For 2016 the ECC had a recycling rate of 25%, twice the rates in the city and county. The landfill diversion rate at the ECC in 2016 was 34% when brush and tree waste are included. These materials are chipped and used as mulch or for making compost.

Bottom Line

Because the ECC receives waste and recyclables from an area much larger than Eldorado, and WMI collects much of the area waste and recyclables, it is not now possible to get an accurate value for our area's performance. Very likely it is at least twice the average city and county rates.

Can We Do Better?

Wastes that are not recycled are **food scraps & landscape trimmings** (some 30% by weight of residential waste!). These, along with non-recyclable tissue and towel paper, and food-contaminated paper and cardboard, are organic materials. So how can we in Eldorado improve our recycling rate?

- ◆ The solution is to compost organic waste.
- ◆ The other solution is for **all of us** to make use of either curbside recycling or the free recycling available at the ECC.

Brought to you by *Eldorado/285 Recycles*. Questions, or interested in helping us promote recycling?
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