

Eldorado/285 Recycles 2024 Annual Report

Introduction

Established in 2012, Eldorado/285 Recycles (E/285R) is a volunteer-driven organization dedicated to reducing waste, promoting recycling, and advancing sustainable practices in Santa Fe County. In 2024, the group achieved significant milestones, including support for a county-wide plastics ordinance, the launch of a Styrofoam collection event, and expansion of its Zero Waste outreach efforts. This report highlights key accomplishments, statistics, and ongoing initiatives.

Officers and Key Volunteers

- **Co-Chairs:** Stephanie Levy and Joe Durlak
- **Treasurer:** Taylor Ward
- **Secretary:** Karen Sweeney

Volunteer Program Leads:

- **Collections:** Sue Daniel
 - **Compost Projects:** Chris Harrell
 - **Event Organizing:** Sue Garfitt
 - **ReUse Center:** Libby Maclaren, Taylor Ward
 - **Statistics:** Pat Bellart, Shirley Knarr, Joe Durlak
 - **Styrofoam Collection:** Pat Bellart, Jim Brown
 - **Vistas Newsletter:** Elsie Krause
 - **Website:** Joe Durlak and Andrew Rodney
 - **Zero Waste Coordination:** Stephanie Levy
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Highlights and Policy Advocacy

- **Santa Fe County Ordinance 2024-06:** Passed unanimously in March, this ordinance bans single-use plastic and expanded polystyrene products in certain commercial operations. Twelve E/285R members testified in support. Three served on the citizen advisory committee. The ordinance went into effect in September.
 - **Beyond Plastics Santa Fe:** A project of E/285R, members include Stephanie Levy, Gary Stoller, Sue Garfitt, Anne Salzmann, and Karen Sweeney. The group launched a dedicated website and presented plastics policy information at the NM Legislature's Interim Water and Natural Resources Committee.
 - **Legislative Advocacy:** HB 392, a 2025 NM plastic bag reduction bill, was supported by the group but did not advance.
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Major Events and Community Outreach

- **Earth Day (April 2024):** E/285R hosted a table at the ECIA event with recycling information and plastic-free alternatives. Libby led a creative reuse station for children.

Stephanie and Karen also represented Beyond Plastics Santa Fe at the County's Hondo Fire Station event.

- **BURRT Field Trip:** Randall Kippenbrock of the Santa Fe Solid Waste Management Agency led an informative tour of the Buckman Road Recycling and Transfer Station. Participants noted that policies and procedures continue to evolve.
 - **Annual Flea Market (June 6):** Held at La Tienda. Successful sales; unsold items were donated to ReUse, Pete's Place, Santa Fe Humane Society, Goodwill, and Savers.
 - **July 4 Parade and Event:** E/285R's float won First Place in the ECIA Parade. Volunteers supported Zero Waste efforts at the community picnic. Libby led a kids' hat-decorating station.
 - **Zero Waste Education:**
 - El Dorado Fire & Rescue Barbecue (Sept. 14)
 - Eldorado Arts & Crafts Association Reception (Sept. 20)
 - Newcomers Picnic (July 22): Shirley introduced Zero Waste to organizers, with support from Pat and Taylor.
 - **Styrofoam Collection Day (Sept. 28):** In partnership with The Foam Recycler of Albuquerque, this first-time event was enthusiastically supported by the community.
 - **Holiday Party:** After years of Zoom meetings, volunteers gathered in person for a year-end celebration at ECIA, including ReUse volunteers.
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Programs and Ongoing Initiatives

ReUse Center

The ReUse Center continues to serve as a hub for material exchange and community connection. With enhanced comfort in winter thanks to heaters donated by The Legal Tender:

- Patron Visits: 8,381
- Materials Diverted: 40,777 liters

Special Collections at La Tienda

E/285R maintains drop-off bins for hard-to-recycle items:

- Corks: 173 lbs
- Dental Material: 99 lbs
- Egg Cartons: ~3,900 annually (~75/week)
- Lights & Cords: 304 lbs
- Metal Bottle Caps: 20 lbs
- Pens & Markers: 103 lbs
- Razors: 16 lbs
- Rubber Bands: Data not recorded
- Shoes: 209 pairs
- Socks: 226 pairs (collected during "Socktober" for local shelters)
- **Backyard Composting**

Although installations declined due to the new Reunity pickup service at La Tienda, backyard composting continues. Overall, more people are composting.
- New Installations: 11
- Replacement Straw Bales: 100
- Replacement Worms: 20

Road Cleanup

Spring 2024 cleanup covered US 285 to Avenida Torrejon. 8–10 volunteers participated; Santa Fe County collected the bags.

Partnerships and Organizational Development

- **ECIA Collaboration:** A new general manager provided an opportunity to re-engage with ECIA leadership. Citing interest in improving waste management, ECIA purchased Clearstream recycling containers previously offered by E/285R. In October, Stephanie presented information to the Board about the mission of Eldorado/285 Recycles, Zero Waste principles, and the newly enacted Santa Fe County Single-Use Plastic Pollution Ordinance that three of our members (Karen Sweeney, Gary Stoller, and Joe Eigner) helped to draft.
 - **Website:** Maintained and updated by Joe Durlak and Andrew.
 - **Data Tracking:** Recognizing the value of volunteer contributions, Pat proposed recording hours. Shirley developed a pilot system to track participation over a 3-month trial.
 - **Vistas Newsletter:** E/285R kept the community informed with monthly articles, including:
 - “Plastic: What’s Hanging in Your Closet?”
 - “Single-Use Plastic Ban Passed”
 - “Recycling Best Practices”
 - “Single-Use Plastics Ban In Effect”
 - “ReUse Center”
 - “Styrofoam Collection”
 - **Storage Improvements:** The E/285R shed was relocated to the new ECIA facility. It is now insulated, organized, and pest-free.
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Looking Ahead to 2025

- Plan and promote a second Styrofoam Collection Day (January 25, 2025)
 - Expand Zero Waste outreach to more community events
 - Strengthen legislative advocacy at the state level
 - Continue tracking volunteer impact
 - Improve website functionality and accessibility
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Acknowledgments

E/285R thanks all its volunteers, partners, and supporters—including The Foam Recycler of Albuquerque, ECIA, and the greater Eldorado community—for helping to build a more sustainable future.