

## Earth Day Challenge aims to clean up Gallup's act

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 22 April 2022 06:40

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Out of the mouths of babes ... comes the inspiration for the Keep Gallup Clean & Beautiful Board's Earth Day Challenge, and everyone can play.

KGCB is asking Gallup businesses and residents to follow the example of Gallup McKinley County Schools' recent Earth Day Challenge initiative.

At the suggestion of science teacher and KGCB board member Mike Condrey, the district issued a challenge to all schools to see which one could pick up the most trash in the community around its campus.

In the hope of expanding on that success, KGCB is asking residents and businesses to do the same over Earth Day weekend, April 22 and 23. The challenge is for businesses to send out employees, and residents to get out of the house, to pick up trash in the surrounding areas for one hour on Earth Day.

About 3,500 students countywide are involved, he said, working through Gallup Wolf Pack, Rehoboth Christian School, NM Titans, GMCS Virtual and Career Learning, Miyamura High School, Kennedy Middle School and MESA Youth.

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"I'm just trying to imagine in my mind what 3,500 students are going to do in an hour," Condrey said. "I took out a MESA group...with 10 people for three hours, we had over 60 bags of trash. The mound was huge. There's a tremendous amount of trash out there." That pickup took what amounted to 30 man hours, he added.

"What would happen if Gallup jumped on board, made this an annual deal and if we all went after it every year, our city – businesses, residents – goes out and gives us one hour, what would 20,000 people do?" Condrey asked at a city council presentation. "Think about that."

KGCB will provide trash bags, grabbers, safety vests, gloves and masks to the community for the Earth Day event, funded by a Keep New Mexico Clean and Beautiful grant from the New Mexico Tourism Department.

Those who wish to help with the cleanup should call Environmental Program Coordinator and KGCB board member Elizabeth Barriga at (505) 863-1212 to arrange to pick up cleanup supplies and schedule a pickup for the trash that's collected. That trash will be weighed so everyone will know how much trash got picked up.

To prove the grant met its goals, which will help secure continued funding, KGCB is asking participants to take before and after photos of the areas where they do cleanups.

Cleanup supplies can be picked up by arrangement Thursdays and Fridays at the Solid Waste facility at 1580 Hassler Valley Rd. The city will request that participants return grabbers, vests and any unused bags after the cleanup.

KGCB will help with the 11<sup>th</sup> annual spring trail cleanup April 16.

Volunteers will meet at 8 am at Bear Springs Plaza, mile marker 3, and fan out to clean up the trail area. To get there, take exit 33 off I-40, to 286 NM400 (the road leading to McGaffey), Fort Wingate. Equipment and lunch will be provided.

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