



County of Los Alamos

Los Alamos, NM 87544
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Council Meeting Staff Report

April 18, 2019

Agenda No.:

Indexes (Council Goals):

Presenters: Lisa Cantrup

Legislative File: 11905-19

Title

Zero Waste Team - Food Waste Reduction for Los Alamos Restaurants

Body

Restaurant Waste: The Zero Waste team focused on restaurant waste, visited many of the 26 Los Alamos/White Rock restaurants to understand how to help reduce (primarily) food waste. Again, the bottom line compels restaurants to order food and measure portions for the least waste, and many would like to recycle and compost, but they could use more help.

All businesses (and dare we add, households?) need education as to what's recyclable and what's not. As Tiffany Pagoda says, "**Wishcycling is *not* recycling!**" Just because you want something to be recyclable, doesn't mean it is. "When in doubt, throw it out" rather than contaminating the entire recycle stream.

Restaurants are eager for the County's proposed food-waste composting, and they want the County to re-offer energy audits to give them both a clear indication of current energy use, but a baseline for comparing progress. For now, if you have pigs, goats, or chickens, you can arrange with a restaurant to pick up their food waste.

As for restaurant waste, most don't have much uneaten food, but if there were, it would be nice to have a service organization or church pick up the food: at Ruby K, one of the Los Alamos Living Treasures picks up leftover bagels to take to the High School.

They want more recycle dumpsters more conveniently located nearer, cardboard recycle for every business, for bars, near-site glass recycling, and more frequent pickup of all recycle. The County charges for recycle; dedication to green costs the business money.

Plastic/disposables waste? Melissa Paternoster of the Blue Window has recommendations for restaurant managers. Education, reduction, replace plastic with biodegradables: (1) proper food purchasing, (2) attention to portions, (3) menu flexibility to repurpose tomorrow what isn't cooked today, (4) no unrequested straws (so far, any straw solution costs five-times more than plastic), (5) biodegradable take-out boxes, and ask if the patron wants utensils (only biodegradables). (7) Initiate the County-wide composting ASAP.

Restaurants would also like a county-specific Green Restaurant Certificate to reward them for the surprisingly expensive, complicated, and strenuous required to be an Earth-friendly eatery.

Attachments

N/A

