

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

County of Luna

Joe "Oleo" Milo, Jr.
Commissioner, District 1

J. Jay Spivey, Chairman
Commissioner, District 2



R. Javier Diaz
Commissioner, District 3

Charles "Tink" Jackson
County Manager

700 South Silver Avenue • Post Office Box 551 • Deming, New Mexico 88031
Telephone (575) 546-0494 Facsimile (575) 544-4293

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Release

Keep Luna County Beautiful is no stranger to accolades. With the help of the community, the county program has been awarded with numerous awards at the state level, but recent recognition has thrust it into the national spotlight for the first time.

The program, which works to beautify and clean the county, was recently awarded two second place prizes by Keep America Beautiful. The county program stood out as second among thousands of other communities across the nation for awards in Litter Prevention & Community Revitalization and in the government category.

"It was a goal of ours from last year, since we had won the state award, we felt we would go for the national awards," Jessica Etcheverry, director of Community Projects, which oversees KCLB, said. "Trying to get first place in the nation is now our goal."

Luna County and Tularosa were the only two out of 24 New Mexico affiliates honored by the national organization. Joe Padilla, KLCB program administrator and codes compliance officer, and Patsy Rodriguez, KCLB board member, will accept the awards on January 26 in Washington, D.C. Padilla is no stranger to the program, having directed Dona Ana County's program before joining Luna County about eight months ago.

"Keep Luna County Beautiful is well known and respected among its affiliates in the region for its impactful work and the extraordinary support it receives from community volunteers," he said. "I was thrilled to join this team and to use what I've learned to help it become even more successful."

The program holds several county-wide cleanups every year with volunteers, as well as ongoing efforts in which local community groups are paid stipends to remove trash from the county.

The county was awarded for projects held within fiscal year 2014, or July 2013 through June 2014. During that time, activities with youth and adult organizations, youth sports partners, and community service organizations included Adopt-a-Roadway, Rest Area Respite, Toss No Mas and the Great American Cleanup. That work resulted in 104,585 pounds of litter being removed from roadways and illegal dumpsites in Luna County.

Other programs included in the awards were the Yard Sale and Recycle Fair, Deming Public School Recycling, mural paintings, and the "You CAN Do It" program. Between a partnership with the City of Deming, Luna County Extension Office, and the Starmax Entertainment Center, the "You CAN Do It" program gives youth swimming or bowling passes in exchange for rinsed and crushed aluminum cans. The program also helped host the annual Recycled Art Show in November — National Recycling Month — with the Deming Arts Council. The "Paint the Town" project helped paint two murals downtown, with more coming, and distributed 60 painted trash barrels around the city.

"We greatly appreciate the support of the community, the Keep Luna County Beautiful board, and of Luna County for allowing us to use its resources to make the program successful," Etcheverry said. "We are extremely fortunate to have such widespread support for our activities and events."

For more information, or ways to get involved with KLCB, contact (575) 543-6625.