



United World College–USA

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United World College Recycles Over One Thousand Pounds of E-Waste

Montezuma, NM - As part of its commitment to sustainability and responsible waste disposal, United World College recycled between 1,200 and 1,500 pounds of obsolete and non-functioning computer equipment at an event held in Albuquerque last week (April 4).

According to the EPA, e-waste is now the fastest-growing part of the municipal waste stream. The harmful materials contained in electronics pose a danger to human health if electronics are not properly processed. For example, cathode ray tubes in computers contain heavy metals that can cause damage to nervous and respiratory systems, and flame retardant plastics, used in electronics casings, can release particles that damage endocrine functions. These toxins have greater likelihood of human contact when unprocessed e-waste is put directly in a landfill. One of the primary dangers is seepage into water systems.

Much of UWC's e-waste was very old, with some manufacturing dates going back to 1992. Recycled systems included College-owned systems as well as systems owned by UWC employees. Accepted items included computer monitors, fax machines, copiers, typewriters, CPUs, DVD and VCR players and games, radios, telephones, cell phones, cameras, and stereo equipment. Televisions and home appliances (such as microwaves, stoves, refrigerators, and air conditioners) were not accepted by the receiving facility.

A team of employees and UWC students worked together to inventory, load and deliver the equipment to the receiving site at Balloon Fiesta Park in Albuquerque.

When asked why UWC took its e-waste all the way to Albuquerque, UWC-USA IT Director Steve Ediger noted, "This unique opportunity from Intel and the City of Albuquerque allowed us to reclaim obsolete equipment that will be rebuilt and sent to people in need. We would rather fill these needs in our local community and are looking at opportunities for doing so in the future. However, the volume and age of the equipment that we had available for recycling meant that we had to look for partners that were capable of handling it."

The e-waste recycling event was co-sponsored by Natural Evolution, Inc., Intel New Mexico, KOAT-TV and the City of Albuquerque. Last year, the event filled 17 tractor trailers with 272,000 pounds of electronic gear.

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