

When we take the time to talk with people who are experts in one of the environmental fields, it helps us to open our eyes to the living environment, to learn how we are affecting the environment as well as the many things we can do each day to care for our land, protect our environment, and protect ourselves. Did you know it takes 200 to 1,000 years for a plastic bag to break down? Isleta Resort & Casino had a poster with a long list of items people use regularly along with the amount of time it takes for these items to break down or decompose.

There were multiple displays featuring the water cycle. When you place unwanted medication in a drug take-back box, you are preventing that medication from possibly polluting our waters. Properly disposing of sharps--such as needles used by people with diabetes--prevents harm to solid waste workers who handle trash and wildlife that might come across it. Scooping the poop (meaning pet waste) is important, not swimming in ditches, using gunlocks are all caring environmental practices.

At the Environmental Fair, you would learn that when people find injured wildlife, there is a place where dedicated people will try to rehabilitate the animal and release it back to the wild or care for it if its only chance of survival is to live in captivity.

Wildlife Rescue of New Mexico brought a large turkey vulture, red-tailed hawk, and American kestrel. Nearby were 4 rescued parrots at Birds of a Feather Parrot Rescue of New Mexico; this organization works to promote the best care of caged birds. At the Environment Department's table, everyone appreciated seeing the eagle's nest replica.

There were non-living examples of wildlife, too. People were in awe being able to check out all kinds of bugs courtesy of the Harrell House Bug Museum, which is located in Santa Fe. Exhibitors had animal pelts and antlers, even a ram horn.

The Solid Waste Program provided lots of helpful information on our community's waste stream, disposal, and recycling which is now available to households throughout Isleta by curbside pickup every week. Solid Waste will have a one-day household hazardous waste collection event on Thursday, August 1st.

Our tribal funding paid for lunch which was prepared and served by Isleta Grill @47. Door prizes were donated by multiple companies and individuals. We are very thankful for their generosity and support of the Environmental Fair. Smokey Bear was in the house! The Bureau of Indian Affairs' primary message was to learn how we can prevent agricultural and wildland fires. Another guest was "Puddles," the big blue bird from Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, which is located on the former Price's Dairy north of Isleta.

For many tribal departments, programs, and the Veterans Association the Environmental Fair was an ideal time for community outreach for answering questions, talking about services, and giving away useful items to help us remember their message and the resources that are available in our community. It was a chance to see some of the Pueblo's red fire trucks.

It is sometimes great if you have access to the internet to look up a weather forecast, or the name of a particular bird you saw as it migrated through Isleta. At the Environmental Fair you could actually talk to someone who works for the National Weather Service. Scientists and other environmental experts were on hand to showcase tools that are used to understand the environment, whether to test for asbestos, deploy a drone, or conduct a long-term ongoing investigation after an unfortunate spill. Staff from quite a few Federal and State agencies were at the Fair to educate us on environmental concerns such as radon. While smoking is the #1 cause of lung cancer, protracted exposure to radon is the #1 cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

The Elder Center had a beautiful photographic display to emphasize the important message that we must not forget lessons taught by our elders. A person could spend quite a lot of time looking at each of the photos and thinking about the words of advice. With great care, the elders put together a model to show the steps it takes to make and care for a traditional earthen floor. One key ingredient deserving our respect is the team effort put into preparation of their display and being present at the Fair.

We had exhibits by some small businesses located on the Pueblo such as Diane Wade pottery, Edwin Lente's flintknapping, jewelry by Yolanda Zuni, printing & other services by Michael Candelaria's company, Three Blind Mice. Planet Fitness of Los Lunas was there too.

Our community made great use of the space at Isleta Rec. Recreation Center staff made a lunch room in the Game area so people could visit with one another, be happy, and enjoy their lunches. A new feature this year to draw the crowds outside was the choice of one caramel apple, cotton candy, nachos, or funnel cake at the Patrick Jojola Family concession stand. Thanks to the generosity of many, door prize winners were delighted.

Most days of the year, you can go to exhibitors in person, give them a call, and learn even more. You are encouraged to get your family and friends and go to Bosque del Apache, Sevilleta, or Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, iExplora!, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, and UNM Maxwell Museum.

[Not all of the exhibitors are mentioned in this article.] There were nearly 70 organizations altogether and hundreds of participants! Environment Department extends its appreciation to our tribal leadership for its support, to Lieutenant Governor Jiron for a traditional opening to the Fair, to Governor Zuni for welcoming everyone, and a sincere thank you to everyone for making this year's Environmental Fair a success!

**Special Thanks to the following POI departments and programs:** Parks and Recreation, Open Space Police, Police Department, Human Resources, Water Resources, Solid Waste, Utilities, Elder Center, Social Services, Head Start, Fire Department, Veterans Association, Diabetes Prevention, Isleta Resort and Casino and Isleta Health Center

# *Thank You From!* The Pueblo of Isleta Environment Department





# *Important Message From* The Pueblo of Isleta Environment Department Notice on vesicular stomatitis

A contagious virus, vesicular stomatitis or VS, that can affect horses and cattle has been found in Sandoval County, Peralta, and Bosque Farms. Infected animals have been ordered to be quarantined by the New Mexico State Vet. VS can spread rapidly. Secondary animals are sheep, lamas, alpacas, and rarely: humans.

The New Mexico Livestock Board has issued a one-page fact sheet on VS, available in this issue of the Newsletter for everyone's information.

Dr. Paul Sandoval of Roadrunner Public Health, Inc., which is the pesticide company under contract to the Pueblo this year for mosquito control, assures the Pueblo that the VS virus can be managed. Sandoval says that the Pueblo's current mosquito program will help keep the virus load under control and will help in slowing the spread of the virus. Once the virus settles in an area, it will stay in the area. The virus can be contracted by directly contacting a sore on an animal; the sore would usually be on or in the mouth of the infected animal. The virus can also be transmitted through bites from the mosquito, black fly, blow fly, deer fly, biting midge, sand fly, and other vectors that are currently being researched. Sandoval said the virus will go dormant after the first freeze and will become active again in the spring when it gets warmer.

Importantly, livestock owners are advised to watch your animals. If showing symptoms, the animal should be diagnosed by a veterinarian.

Please contact Ruben Lucero, Environment Department Manager, at 869-9819 if you have any questions on this matter.