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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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Become a Black Belt in Recycling

City Challenges Public to Reduce Recycling Contamination

EL PASO, Texas—The City of El Paso Environmental Services Department (ESD) is challenging El Pasoans to become Black Belts in Recycling to help reduce the amount of contamination found in blue bins.

“We have a recycling contamination problem,” said Ellen Smyth, City of El Paso Environmental Services Department Managing Director. “The past five years, the City spent more than \$1.1 million to landfill material that didn’t belong in the blue bins because approximately one in three items tossed in the blue were not materials accepted in our Curbside Recycling Program. To reduce the community’s recycling contamination rate, we are introducing a recycling challenge program allowing the public to earn prizes as they complete virtual educational activities teaching them about materials that belong in the blue bin.”

ESD is challenging the community to help flip El Paso’s contamination rate from 32 percent to 23 percent by 2023. The national average for recycling contamination is 25 percent.

ESD’s Recycling Challenge features three belts – yellow, green and black. The color-coded rankings system will reward participants along their journey to becoming a Black Belt in recycling.

Customers who join the challenge will learn:

- Tips to reduce waste and improve recycling
- Which materials are accepted and not accepted in the Curbside Recycling Program
- Why certain recyclables, such as glass, shouldn’t be tossed in the blue bins, and much more.

To take the challenge, visit www.elpasotexas.gov/recycle, call (915) 212-6000 or download the free ESD Works for You App.

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