

## Save Big with a SMART Toilet

Written by By Melinda Russell Sun Correspondent  
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Elizabeth Barriga, Water Conservation Coordinator for the City of Gallup, may be soft spoken but her passion for her job is evident. Barriga is a California girl but has lived here in Gallup for 10 years. Her background is in landscape architecture. She has an abundance of information available to Gallup city residents who are concerned about saving on their water bills and saving Gallup's water supply.

You may not consider toilet discussions exciting or even in good taste but the City of Gallup has a deal you cannot refuse. They are giving away energy saving toilets – 100 of them! The city received the toilets as a result of a grant. She says it is easy to apply to receive the grant. You can call 863-1393, visit Utilities Engineering at 230 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, or make an appointment for them to come to you. Yes! They make house calls. The only prerequisite to qualify for the program is that the toilet you are replacing must be over 20 years old and it must be a 3.5 gallon commode. When Barriga processes your application, she can help you figure out if you qualify or not.

The SMART Toilet Distribution is a first come, first serve grant that will be over when the toilets are gone. Not only can you get a new toilet free of charge, you can also receive credit against your utility bill for the cost of installation. The details for this program can be found online at [www.gallupnm.gov](http://www.gallupnm.gov) and type in Smart Toilet in the search box.

Barriga told a story about a lady who had 2 leaky toilets. She used over 40,000 gallons of water in 1 month. It was very expensive and wasteful. "Toilets are the easiest way to reduce water waste in our homes," said Barriga explaining that the problem could be as simple as a small flapper!

The Water Conservation office also has information regarding "gray" water redirection that reuses bath and dish water and rainwater harvesting. Other rebate programs available from the City of Gallup include transitioning from grass to xeriscape, high efficiency clothes washers and

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rain barrels for water collection.

Bill Bright, Chairman of the Sustainable Gallup Board encourages residents to take advantage of all the conservation remedies they can.

“The #1 step that we can tell everybody is conservation: the shower, the tap. Start now, conserving water and power.” He added, “Water and energy are connected. Even if you aren’t concerned about conservation or the environment, you can benefit immediately by saving on your utility bills.”