

New Mexico

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Discover

Eight small-town experiences throughout the state

*Innovative
Entrepreneurs
Launch
Native-Led
Businesses*

Plus

EXPLORE NEW
FILM INDUSTRY
OPPORTUNITIES

SPACE VALLEY

Find out why the state's commercial space industry is primed for takeoff



Southwest Cheese



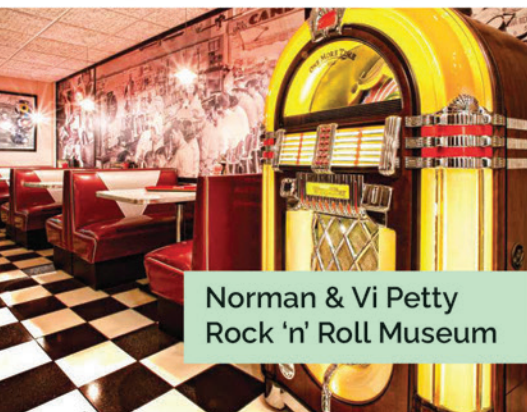
Hillcrest Park Zoo



BNSF Railway



Norman Petty Recording Studio



Norman & Vi Petty Rock 'n' Roll Museum

Partner with us and experience
**heartfelt connections.
endless horizons.**

CLOVIS

NEW MEXICO

Certified Gigabit Internet City

Second Largest Zoo in New Mexico

Direct daily flights from
Clovis to Denver and Dallas

Low Cost of Living



Quick & Easy Construction
Permitting/Inspection

Cash Grants for Job Creation

30-Year Property Tax Exemption

DevelopClovis.com

575-763-6600



Paid in part by the City of Clovis, NM Lodger's Tax Fund.



8 Craft Beverages

Beer Bash

The state's craft beer scene is growing – in big cities and small towns alike.



Plus

Five reasons your business should call New Mexico home
Story on page 7

12 *Agriculture*
Hot and Getting Hotter
Chiles are big business in the value-added agriculture industry.

14 *Innovation*
Booming Bioscience
New Mexico boasts a growing bioscience sector.

18 Community Profile
Check out these fast facts and stats about the state.

19 *Energy*
Company Chronicles
Pajarito Powder establishes its hydrogen-based industry in New Mexico.

The Heart

OF THE

**MIDDLE RIO GRANDE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**



MRGEDA's goal is to enhance the quality of life in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, while reinforcing the unique characteristics of our counties and communities.

mrgeda.com

Contact: Kirstin Keller – kirstin.keller@hotmail.com



MIDDLE RIO GRANDE



Contact: Amber Vaughn
avaughn@sierraco.org

sierraco.org



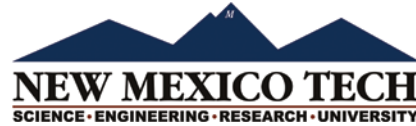
City of Socorro
New Mexico



Mission: Socorro County is dedicated to serving the public in a fair, honest, efficient and cost-effective manner. Though we are a government with several elected offices and agencies, we are committed to working as a team to get things done for our constituents and employees. Our organization is also committed to transparency and access to services. Lastly, we are focused on fulfilling our duties as professionals.

Contact: Michael Hawkes, mhawkes@co.socorro.nm.us

socorrocounty.net



NEW MEXICO TECH
SCIENCE • ENGINEERING • RESEARCH • UNIVERSITY



Proud to Call Socorro County Home

nmt.edu





LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

Whether you're at work or at play, in Santa Fe County we mean business. We work hard in our community so that we can enjoy the beauty of our incredible surroundings. A move to Santa Fe County means skiing in the morning, golfing in the afternoon and everything in between.



santafecountynm.gov

New Mexico ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

— 2024 Edition • Volume 5 —

V.P./Director of Content • **Bill McMeekin**
Senior Editor • **John Nailey**
Editors • **Lindsey Hyde, Holly Tilleross**
Sponsored Content Editor • **Susan Chappell**
Contributing Writers • **Brittany Anas, Amy Antonation, Val Hunt Beerbower, Wesley Broome, Renee Elder, Bill Lewis, Kim Madlom, Greg Phillips, Kelly Rogers**
Staff Writer • **Kevin Litwin**

V.P./Creative Services • **Laura Gallagher**
V.P./Operations • **Molly Morton**
Art Director • **Amy Hiemstra**
Senior Graphic Designers • **Eliza Hawkins, Beatrice Herndon, Cynthia Hester, Emmylou Rittenour, Lindsey Tallent**
Photo Director • **Alison Hunter**
Photo Editor • **Jess Spence**

Senior Photographers • **Jeff Adkins, Nathan Lambrecht**

V.P./Digital Strategy • **Richard Stevens**
Digital Editor In Chief • **Amanda Ellis**
Digital Marketing Director/Managing Editor
Cara Sanders
SEO Editor • **Misty Emery**
Web Developer • **Eric Montzka**
Digital Graphic Designer • **Catherine Atlas**

Integrated Media Manager • **Adam Schiller**
V.P./Sales Operations • **Katie Middendorf**
Ad Traffic Coordinator • **Patricia Moisan**
Senior Ad Coordinator/Designer • **Vikki Williams**
Senior Marketing Designer • **Holly Bikakis**
Marketing Coordinator • **Sarah Henderson**



**LIVABILITY
MEDIA**

This magazine is published annually by Livability Media, a division of Journal Communications Inc., and distributed through the New Mexico Partnership.

Chairman • **Greg Thurman**
President/Publisher • **Bob Schwartzman**
Chief Operating Officer • **Kim Holmberg**
Executive Vice President • **Jordan Moore**
Senior V.P./Content Strategy • **Jessy Yancey**
V.P./Business Development • **Jared Lane**
Business Development Executives
Drew Colston, Chad Eastham

Controller • **Chris Dudley**
Senior Accountant • **Lisa Owens**
Accounts Payable Coordinator • **Maria McFarland**
Database Director • **Debbie Woksa**
Executive Secretary • **Kristy York**
Human Resources Manager • **Peggy Blake**

For advertising information or to direct questions or comments about the magazine, contact Journal Communications Inc. at 615-771-0080 or by email at info@jnlcom.com.

For more information, contact:
New Mexico Partnership
1720 Louisiana Blvd. NE, Suite 312
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-247-8500 • nmpartnership.com

©Copyright 2023 Journal Communications Inc., 6550 Carothers Parkway, Suite 420, Franklin, TN 37067, 615-771-0080. All rights reserved. No portion of this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without written consent.



Please recycle this magazine.

- 20** *Aerospace*
Welcome to Space Valley
New Mexico propels the commercial space industry forward.
- 23** *Workforce*
Space Travelers in Training
Programs prepare civilians for the space industry.
- 24** *Entrepreneurs*
Open for Business
Native American entrepreneurs find support from incubators and each other.



30



34

PHOTOS, FROM TOP: SERGIO SALVADOR; VISIT FARMINGTON; JIM WILKERSON/MEDIA ESRA

28 *Executives*
Women Who Lead
New Mexico welcomes diversity in the C-suite.

30 *Outdoor Recreation*
Outdoor Enthusiasts Mean Business
Opportunities abound in this diverse, natural playground.

34 *Quality of Life*
The Good Life
Small towns offer a rich way of life.

38 *Film Scene*
Movie Magic
Film production thrives in the Land of Enchantment.

41 Economic Profile
Dive into the state's economy.

On the Cover *(story on page 24)*

Native Max CEO Kelly Holmes mentors entrepreneurs through the Creatives Indigenous program.

Photo by Sergio Salvador



20

EnergyPlex®

Lea County, NM

 **LIVABILITY®**

livability.com/nm

See what's happening online



Find Your Place

There are a lot of factors to consider when choosing a new place to live. We have 16 questions you should ask yourself before making this life-changing decision. livability.com/find-your-next-place



Make Your Move

Moving can be daunting. You know you have tons of tasks to complete, but where do you even start? Learn from someone who's moved five times to five different states. livability.com/11-moving-tips



Test Drive That City

You've got your sights set on a new place to live! But here's why you should take that city for a spin first before making the final decision to pack up and move there. livability.com/test-drive-city



New City! Now What?

So you chose your new city and made the move. What's next? Now comes the fun part! Check out these six things you need to know about starting a new life in a new place. livability.com/life-in-new-city

EnergyPlex® Park
9,600 Acres Available for
Mega-Site Development

Select your site today!
www.energyplexpark.com

Read the **Digital Magazine**

Twice the Views

Visit livability.com/nm to read each feature or view the digital magazine.

Social in a Snap

Share an interesting article or captivating image on your social platforms easily and quickly.

Embed in Your Site

Post the digital magazine on your website and share it with the world!



Find Your Best Place To Live at **LIVABILITY.COM**

Westward Bound

FIVE REASONS YOUR BUSINESS SHOULD CALL NEW MEXICO HOME ◦ *By Kelly Rogers*

Choosing the right place to start or grow your business is an important decision, and there are always multiple factors to consider. From a supportive business community to a robust pipeline of talent, here's a quick snapshot of five reasons New Mexico might just be the perfect place for your company.

1) Location, Location, Location

One of New Mexico's biggest draws for businesses is its transportation connectivity. Whether by road, air or rail, New Mexico is extremely accessible. It contains three major interstates, two major railroad providers (BNSF and Union Pacific), and a multitude of rail-served parks. Seventy-five percent of the United States is reachable within two days by truck, and the state is equidistant to two international ports – Los Angeles/Long Beach and Houston. New Mexico is also at an extremely low risk for catastrophic events like flooding, hurricanes and tornadoes, which have the potential to seriously disrupt business operations in other locations. Finally, with a mild climate year-round and a low cost of living, quality of life in New Mexico is undeniable, driving talent to the state.

2) R&D Ecosystem

Innovation and research are woven into the fabric of New Mexico's history. For decades, its research and development (R&D) ecosystem has been a source of growth. New Mexico is home to three national labs: Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory, which are both Department of Energy national labs, and the Air Force Research Laboratory, which is home to the Directed Energy and



Space Vehicles directorates. The state was even ranked No. 1 in nonindustry investment in R&D and No. 2 for high-tech jobs by Business Facilities.

3) Incentives Aplenty

New Mexico has a plethora of incentives available for businesses, both relocating and expanding from within the state. One of the most impactful of those incentives is the state's Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), which reimburses 50% to 75% of wages for on-the-job and classroom training for expanding or relocating businesses for up to six months. The state also provides numerous industry specific incentives like the Rural Jobs Tax Credit or the Manufacturers Investment Tax Credit. Additionally, the cost of doing business for most industries is lower than the national average. What more could you ask for?

4) Talent and Diversity

The ability to find talented people with the right skill set is crucial for business growth. New Mexico has a pool of diverse talent, ranging from experienced professionals to fresh graduates from one of several universities. New Mexico has concentrations in everything from engineering and the sciences to logistics and manufacturing.

5) Growing Population

New Mexico's population is at 2.1 million people and counting, and from 2000 to 2018, it experienced a 31% increase. In the last five years alone, over 350,000 people have relocated to New Mexico, many coming from nearby states like Arizona, California, Texas and Colorado. The Mountain Region, of which New Mexico is a part, has one of the fastest growth rates in the nation. [Learn more](#)



BEER *Bash*

The state's craft beer scene is growing – in big cities and small towns alike



The owners of Red River Brewing Company & Distillery (pictured) have turned their small town into a craft beverage destination.

New Mexicans love craft beer. According to the Brewers Association, the state had 104 craft breweries in 2022 and was ranked the 10th highest in the nation for most breweries per capita. It's clear: New Mexico's brewing scene is flourishing.

"We're very independent and very local," Ebbie Edmonston, executive director of the New Mexico Brewers Guild, says of its membership. While Edmonston took the reins of the organization in 2023, she's worked in the state's craft beer industry for a decade.

"I think the culture has changed a lot," she says, pointing to the increase in the number of breweries in the past 10 years as well as the rise of "beer vacations" and "the number of tourists coming into town saying, 'I want to check out the breweries.'"



Award-winning beer is a draw for locals and visitors. At the 2022 Great American Beer Festival, Santa Fe's Rowley Farmhouse Ales, Corrales' Ex Novo Brewing Company and Albuquerque's Quarter Celtic Brewpub all took home medals.

Big Brews

Without a doubt, one of the biggest breweries in the New Mexico craft beer scene is Santa Fe Brewing Co. (SFBC), founded in 1988. It's the oldest and largest beer producer in the state, turning out 45,000

barrels per year, with five taprooms in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Marble Brewery and La Cumbre Brewing Co., both based in Albuquerque, are other production leaders.

Even after 35 years, SFBC continues to lean into its roots as a true New Mexico original selling approximately 90% of its product in the state.

"Every brewery wants to sell as much as they can in their own city, county and state," says brewmaster Bert Boyce. "We doubled down on our 'New Mexico first' strategy, and that's worked for us."

By choice, the brewery maintains a small distribution territory (Arizona, Colorado and El Paso,

Texas) that ensures only fresh brews reach customers.

The operation even has a small hop farm located between Santa Fe and Taos where it grows native New Mexican hops for occasional use in select batches of experimental beer. Independent operation La Capilla Hops Farm in Santa Fe is another source for local hops and supplies several regional breweries.

Small Suds

Beer isn't just a big-city thing in New Mexico.

"I have made it a personal goal to visit every single brewery in the state in this first year," Edmonston says. "It is hard! I have to put a lot more miles on my car."

The Ale Trail map on newmexico.org lists breweries throughout the state,

including in smaller cities and towns; places like Sierra Blanca Brewing Company in Moriarty, one of the state's oldest craft breweries with a scenic beer garden. There's also Truth or Consequences Brewing Company in T or C, where a cold beverage pairs nicely with a dip in one of the local hot springs.

Then, there's Red River Brewing Company & Distillery in the northern town of Red River, which is home to under 600 residents. Co-owner and general manager Michael Calhoun was born and raised in the small mountain community, and after a career working at Los Alamos National Laboratory, he returned to his hometown with his wife, Sharon, and opened the brewery and 385-seat restaurant in 2018.

"The economy here is 100% tourism," says Calhoun, so visitors who enjoy the area's mountain recreation are the vast majority of his business. The operation was immediately successful because of its novelty in a stable market. Calhoun eventually added the distillery "because some people are not into beer, believe it or not," he says. "We'd have people come in and order a margarita, and it always kind of broke my heart when I had to say no."

Now, the distillery is the fastest-growing segment of the business. A dedicated spirits production facility opened in 2023, which not only increased spirits capacity, but also freed up production space in the brewhouse. Calhoun estimates Red River made 700 barrels of beer in 2022 and will top 1,000 barrels in 2023.

"It doesn't make us too big," Calhoun says. "It makes us just right."

— Amy Antonation

Learn more about where to find a good brew across the state at livability.com/nm.



La Capilla
Hops Farm



Santa Fe Brewing Co. at
Green Jeans Food Hall

Hot and Getting **HOTTER**

Chiles are big business in value-added agriculture industry

A key part of New Mexico's diverse and well-established agriculture sector is the food production industry. With companies in the state making cheese, snack foods, tortillas, roasted chiles and more, there's truly a stunning variety of food products coming out of the southwestern state. For example, Leprino Foods, Southwest Cheese and Saputo are just a few cheese producers in a state that collectively turn out over 970 million pounds of cheese every year, making it the fourth-highest cheese-producing state in the country.

But nothing says New Mexico like its most iconic product: the green chile. During harvest season, the green chiles make their way to neighboring states and even across the country, where bushels are still often sold in tents along the roadside and roasted over live fire to order – but Bueno Foods, which was founded in the early 1950s by a trio of brothers from the Baca family, took that idea and ran with it.

“Generations of New Mexicans had roasted green chiles during harvest season on wood stoves, on cast iron skillets or in ovens.

They could only enjoy this tradition during the autumn season, though, because refrigeration and freezing were unheard of,” says Ana Baca, vice president of marketing and communications and daughter of co-founder Joe Baca. As the first company to process green chiles in commercial quantities, Joe, Ray and Augustine Baca built their own equipment and developed processes for roasting, seeding and freezing chiles from scratch.

Now, Bueno Foods processes millions of pounds of green chiles each year, Ana says, and in early 2023, it opened what it claims is the largest chile freezer in the country: “It's chock full of a little more than 10 million pounds of chiles.”

In addition to flash-frozen chopped green chiles,

Bueno produces a red chile sauce, a line of salsas, tortillas, enchiladas and tamales. Still, its best-seller remains the product that's central to the brand's story: flame-roasted New Mexico green chile, available in mild, hot or extra hot.

Longstanding businesses like Bueno Foods have played an important role in not only the local economy, but the state's culture and identity for decades. This track record of success has also helped to attract new food producers to New Mexico, continuing the growth of the industry in the state. New Orleans-based Louisiana Pepper Exchange, which supplies pepper purees for use in hot sauce manufacturing, and vegetable processor Oro LLC both recently purchased land in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, in order to expand production and distribution capabilities.

– Amy Antonation

Learn more about well-known brands produced in the state at livability.com/nm.



PHOTOS: FROM LEFT: JEFF ADKINS; BUENO FOODS

Meta, Amazon and Walmart call us home.

Contact us to find out why.



New Mexico's ideal business climate plus our strong talent pool make Los Lunas the ideal place to live, work and play. Learn more at ACommunityThatWorks.com.

Visit Our Advertisers

Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance
abq.org

ARGUS Investment Realty, Inc.
argusinvestmentrealty.com

Artesia Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development
artesiachamber.com

Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation
cibolaedc.com

City of Farmington
fmntn.org

Clovis/Curry County Chamber of Commerce
clovisnm.org

EDC of Lea County
edclc.org

Epcor USA
epcor.com

Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association
mrgeda.com

New Mexico Partnership
nmpartnership.com

Santa Fe County
santafecountynm.gov

Village of Los Lunas
acomunitythatworks.com

CIBOLA COMMUNITIES

Live, Work, Play ...



YOU CAN *have it all!*

**Cibola Communities
Economic Development Foundation**
1015 E. Roosevelt Ave. • Grants, NM 87020
505-658-2911 • cibolaedc.com



BOOMING BIOSCIENCE

NEW MEXICO BOASTS A GROWING BIOSCIENCE SECTOR





Nature's Toolbox opened in Rio Rancho in 2021.



The bioscience industry is a source for innovation in New Mexico, with companies making new developments in allergy treatments, increasing crop yields and advancing medical device technology.

With nearly 150 bioscience startups formed here in the last 10 years, bioscience is an industry of opportunity in the state. According to the 2020 Bioscience Economy Report, the country's bioscience industry is growing faster and more substantially than many other industries in the private sector. New Mexico's bioscience industry experienced 15.8% total employment growth from 2018 to 2021, outpacing the national employment growth of 11%.

FERTILE GROUND

The state is poised to reap the benefits of this nationally growing sector. The New Mexico Bioscience Authority (NMBSA), which was created in 2017 as a public-private

partnership, connects collaborators in the industry, including universities, research and development organizations, entrepreneurs, investors, elected officials and the workforce, to grow bioscience throughout the state. NMBSA recently launched a Community Readiness Program that helps communities throughout the state position themselves to attract bioscience businesses. The current certified-ready communities include Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Las Cruces and Clovis.

"We are working on empowering the entire state to be bioscience productive," says Stephanie Tofghi, NMBSA executive director. "So, we want that to occur in the urban areas of Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces, and also in the rural communities of Clovis and others."

NMBSA developed a list of certification protocols for municipalities and organizations to help attract and grow bioscience

investment. Infrastructure – available sewer, water, high-speed internet – is essential to any industry, especially bioscience companies.

“Bioscience is a much faster-moving industry than many others,” Tofighi says. “Tech companies can work remotely, but bioscience companies need brick and mortar buildings with lab space.”

The Community Readiness Program addresses this issue by encouraging communities to develop shovel-ready sites, identifying a point person who can lead bioscience companies through the location process and having incentives in place.

“Communities like Clovis are excellent choices for bioscience companies,” Tofighi says.

The Bioscience Authority is working with the city and economic development officials to complete the Community Readiness Certification requirements.

“We’ve got a lot of very smart people innovating in the state,” Tofighi says. “That brainpower is displayed

“We’ve got a lot of very smart people innovating in the state.”

– Stephanie Tofighi, New Mexico Bioscience Authority

in the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), one of the world’s largest and most complex scientific research laboratories.”

SUCCESS STORIES

A fellowship with LANL brought Alex Koglin to New Mexico in 2009. In 2021, Koglin and co-founder Michael Humbert opened their bioscience company Nature’s Toolbox (NTx) in Rio Rancho. NTx has developed technology that uses non-biological processes to create biological medicines, such as insulin and mRNA vaccines. NTx moved from a business incubator at Santa Fe Community College to Rio Rancho to accommodate its growth.

Additionally, biologist Cliff Han, who trained as a doctor in China and came to the U.S. in 1996,

worked at LANL for 22 years before retiring and founding his own bioscience company, Knoze Jr., to create a product that provides long-term allergy relief. The product, AllerPops, treats what Han believes is the root cause of environmental allergies. He says that by stabilizing levels of “good” oral bacteria, his product helps “switch off” an overworking immune system that makes people sneeze or cough.

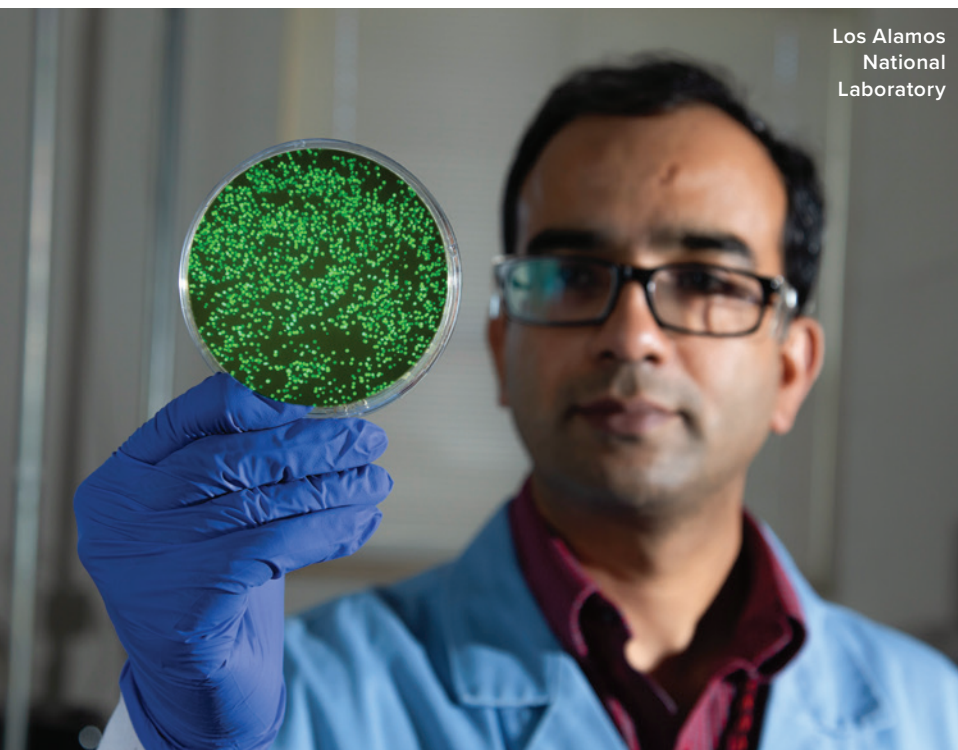
Han launched AllerPops in 2018 and expanded in early 2023 with new products, including a lozenge version, a prebiotic toothpaste, mouthwash tablets and pet allergy supplements.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

New Mexico’s higher education institutions are also significant assets to bioscience companies operating in the state. The University of New Mexico is a springboard for health-related startups working to commercialize new medical devices, diagnostic tools and therapeutics, while New Mexico State University is doing the same for agricultural-related biotechnology. Additionally, New Mexico Tech serves as an R&D center and has more than a dozen research divisions that work with private industry, government agencies and other universities to contribute to cutting-edge research.

“We have a fantastic ecosystem of innovation,” Tofighi says. “We are committed to making New Mexico a bioscience hub, but we don’t want that to mean just one or two areas of the state. We want to work with all of the state’s municipalities to identify sites and build a larger bioscience ecosystem.”

– Kim Madlom



Los Alamos
National
Laboratory

PHOTO: SANDRA M. VALDEZ

Small Town, BIG BENEFITS



Artesia has a lot to offer and no plans to slow down

With a population of just under 12,500, Artesia doesn't tout itself as a big city – but it does have some big plans for future growth.

“We're a quiet town, and we're very aware of our identity,” says Mayor Jon Henry. “We know who we are and love who we are. We're not going to lose that as we grow, we're going to

grow within that identity.”

Part of that identity is providing the small community with great facilities, business opportunities and more that provide citizens with a high quality of life while staying true to the city's roots.

Once named New Mexico's most beautiful library, Artesia Public Library is a must-see with a 56,000-pound Peter Hurd mural. Artesia Aquatic Center boasts two indoor pools for many activities, including swim meets for Artesia High School. An outdoor pool in the shape of Artesia's mascot, the Bulldog, is complete with a lazy river for a collar and three slides providing hours of summer fun.

Artesia Main Street not only has great boutiques,

but 11 statues that depict the city's history in bronze.

Henry says adding to these amenities, plus bringing more housing to the area, is a top priority.

several private-sector investments from local foundations that are contributing to new facilities with charitable dollars, including a new

“We're the perfect mix of small-town living and exciting growth.”

– Jon Henry, Mayor



Artesia offers an array of attractive amenities and a great quality of life.

“We don't want to be a ‘pass-through’ town,” he says. “We want people to come see how great our community is and stay here so we can bring in more restaurants, stores and entertainment. Our government is very proactive, and we want people to know that we're open for business.”

To help build this growth, Artesia is fortunate to have

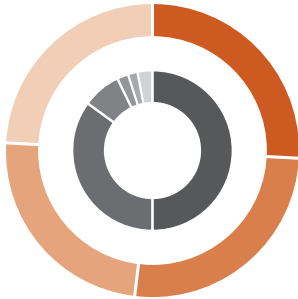
recreation center. This, coupled with a housing plan that's in the works, makes Artesia an exciting place to land.

“We're the perfect mix of small-town living and exciting growth,” Henry concludes.

Learn more about the Artesia Chamber of Commerce at artesiachamber.com or 575-746-2744.

Community Profile

DEMOGRAPHICS



AGE

■ Under 19	26%
■ 20-39	26%
■ 40-59	24%
■ 60+	24%

ETHNICITY

■ Hispanic	50%
■ White	35%
■ Native	8%
■ Black	2%
■ Asian	2%
■ Two or more races	3%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

87.5%

High school grad or higher

30.1%

Bachelor's degree or higher

POPULATION

2,115,877

New Mexico

39.1

Average age

9.1%

Foreign-born population

7.9%

Population with veteran status

HOUSEHOLDS

Number of households **834,007**

Persons per household **2.5**

Number of housing units **948,042**

Owner-occupied units **70%**

Renter-occupied units **30%**

Median value of owner-occupied housing units **\$214,000**

SAMPLE OF NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITIES

- » Eastern New Mexico University
- » Navajo Technical University
- » New Mexico Highlands University
- » New Mexico State University
- » The University of New Mexico
- » University of the Southwest
- » Western New Mexico University

TRANSPORTATION



Drives alone
72%



Walks
2%



Carpools
9%



Other
1%



Bikes
1%



Works from home
15%

Sources: Census Reporter, U.S. Census, New Mexico Partnership

THIS SECTION IS SPONSORED BY

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

>>> The Heart of Economic Development in the Middle Rio Grande <<<

KEY INDUSTRIES



Agribusiness



Arts, Entertainment & Recreation



Health Care



Renewable Energy



Technology



Workforce/ Education



MRGEDA's goal is to enhance the quality of life in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, while reinforcing the unique characteristics of our counties and communities.

Contact: Kirstin Keller, Executive Director / P.O. Box 143 / Socorro, NM 87801 / (575) 517-0310 / mrgeda.com

COMPANY CHRONICLES

Pajarito Powder establishes its hydrogen-based industry in New Mexico ◦ *By Kevin Litwin*

While hydrogen has become an increasingly viable energy solution, many of today's hydrogen fuel cells in cars, trucks, trains, ships and planes rely on expensive precious metals, like platinum and iridium, as catalysts to produce electricity for power. However, New Mexico is moving to the forefront of a growing industry, and Albuquerque-based Pajarito Powder seeks to leverage new technology to make hydrogen fuel cells more cost-efficient by reducing the amount of platinum and iridium required for catalyst.

Pajarito Powder CEO and co-founder Tom Stephenson talks about the advantages of being an innovator in the growing hydrogen industry – all from New Mexico.

Why did Pajarito Powder establish its business in New Mexico?

The answer is simple – many of us are from the Albuquerque area and like the region, so that's where we established our company in 2012. Also, some of us have previous work connections with Los Alamos National Laboratory near Santa Fe.

What does Pajarito Powder do?

We manufacture a black powder catalyst for fuel cells that can reduce the use of expensive platinum and iridium catalysts that are mostly used in fuel cells today. Our powder catalyst dramatically brings down the cost of a fuel cell.

What part does hydrogen play?

It's complicated, but by using our electrolyzer black powder process, we take water and add electricity and then split the hydrogen and oxygen. We can trap and store the hydrogen that can then be used in transportation, aerospace, defense, food production, logistics and

agriculture industries. Hydrogen can even run fuel cells to generate water, electricity, and heat for homes and appliances.

Who are some of Pajarito's customers?

Hyundai Motor Group is a huge manufacturer of heavy-duty trucks, and they have made a commitment that every commercial vehicle will run on the hydrogen technology by 2028. We are also dealing with Daimler and their truck division, and we are in talks with General Motors. Our technology is also ideal for warehousing companies like Amazon, FedEx and Walmart that all operate large forklifts that run on hydrogen.

What makes the state advantageous for businesses in the hydrogen industry?

In 2022, New Mexico introduced a Hydrogen Hub Development Act that will expand the clean energy economy by providing incentives to produce low-carbon hydrogen.



Hydrogen is ideal to help run manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, refueling and electric-generating facilities across the state.

Another recent positive for your company is that Pajarito Powder moved into a new facility, right?

Fall 2023 is when we relocated to a new headquarters and a much larger manufacturing facility that will increase our output 10 or even 20 times for some materials. And we are very happy to still be in Albuquerque, where it all began for us. 🙌

WIND-WIND SITUATION

New energy farm spans three New Mexico counties

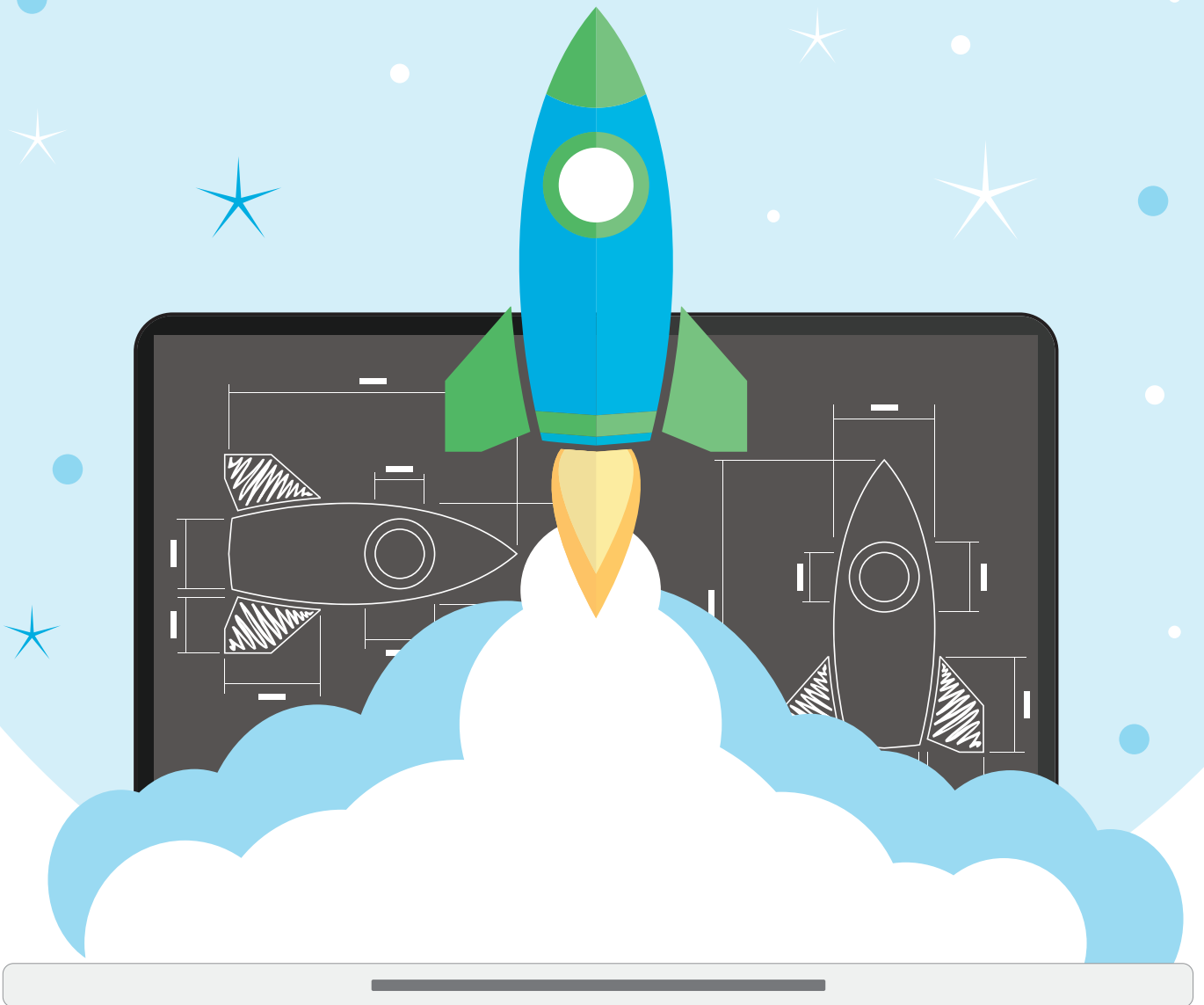
In Central New Mexico, there are 377 wind turbines located collectively in Guadalupe, Lincoln and Tarrant counties, and the massive amount of generated electricity from the wind farm is being sold to utility companies in California.

San Francisco-based Pattern Energy has installed the turbines and transmission lines as part of a wind project called Western Spirit, which can supply electricity to about 1 million customers in California. The company invested \$2 billion in the Western Spirit project, and Pattern Energy previously spent \$1.6 billion in New Mexico on a wind energy farm in Curry County.

Learn more about how New Mexico landowners and students are benefiting from the project at livability.com/nm-wind-energy.

Welcome to **SPACE VALLEY**

NEW MEXICO PROPELS THE COMMERCIAL SPACE INDUSTRY FORWARD



New Mexico's nickname, "Space Valley," is a sign of the state's leadership role in the commercial space industry, which is on track to reach a value exceeding \$1 trillion over the next couple of decades, according to Charlie Hurley, spokesman for Spaceport America.

New Mexico lived up to the name Space Valley by being the third state to reach space in 2021. The state benefits from approximately 140 space-related ventures and is home to Spaceport America, the world's first purpose-built commercial spaceport.

Epicenter of Space Exploration

"We want to make sure Space Valley is as well-known as Silicon Valley. We have research and development, launch facilities and every type of space-related company," Hurley says. "We want to have a vision of having it all here – space tourism, launch facilities – along Interstate 25, all within 250 miles," he says of the industry.

Spaceport America's anchor tenant is Virgin Galactic, a pioneer in space tourism. SpinLaunch is another Spaceport company that has created an alternative method for putting 200-kilogram class satellites into low-Earth orbit. Unlike traditional fuel-based rockets, SpinLaunch uses a ground-based, electric-powered kinetic launch system that delivers a substantially less expensive and environmentally sustainable approach to space launches.

Technological Advancements

Life in space begins with innovations by companies like mPower Technology. Based in Albuquerque, the company was chosen to participate in the NASA Artemis program, which aims to return humans to the moon as the first step toward permanent lunar habitation and Mars exploration.



SpinLaunch

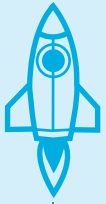


Spaceport America tenants include SpinLaunch (top) and Virgin Galactic.

Solstar Space Co., a Santa Fe-based company, provides internet-based communication solutions that make living and working in space more efficient. The technology makes it possible for anyone – from a space tourist to an astronaut – to access the internet from space. As missions extend past Earth's

orbit to the moon and beyond, Solstar's technology will make communicating from space as easy as opening a laptop on Earth.

"Astronauts will be using it," says Brian Barnett, Solstar's founder and CEO. "Or if there are scientific experiments on board and Wi-Fi enabled, then scientists on the



ACHIEVING LIFTOFF

Spaceport America is a major player in the state's space industry

More than 100 college and university rocketry teams arrive each summer at Spaceport America to participate in an annual Spaceport America Cup competition. The extravaganza features six days of competitive events, with all teams showcasing the design, construction and flight of their individual rockets.



“The rockets vary in size, including some that are 9 or 10 feet tall,” says Charlie Hurley, Spaceport America spokesman. “It’s an exciting competition, with

as many as 100 rocket launches occurring during the course of a day. Some of the rockets can go as high as 10,000 feet.”

Teams were in attendance from every continent except Antarctica for the 2023 Spaceport America Cup.

“Competitions are in several categories, and the overall winner in 2023 was Brigham Young University,” Hurley says.

When not hosting the Cup, the 18,000-acre Spaceport America property is home to tenants such as AeroVironment, HAPSMobile, SpinLaunch, UP Aerospace and Virgin Galactic.

“Our mission at Spaceport America is to be a gateway to space for everyone,” Hurley says. “Economic projections have the overall space industry reaching a level of \$1.2 trillion by 2040, and we’re making sure that we are a major player in this industry.”

– Kevin Litwin

ground could interact with their experiments. That’s one of the benefits of our technology. We enable scientists on the ground 24/7 access to their experiments.”

In 2023, Solstar Space secured a \$1.25 million Phase II Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract for its Deke Space Communicator.

Obruta Space Solutions is a Canadian startup and a member of Q Station, a collaborative workspace supported by the Air Force Research Laboratory and the U.S. Space Force. Its Autonomous Rendezvous, Proximity Operations and Docking (RPOD) software enables spacecraft to safely operate in proximity with each other.

“With Obruta’s membership in the Q Station’s Space Tech Cohort, the Q Station and Air Force Research Laboratory have recognized the potential of Obruta’s RPOD technology in supporting the U.S. space industry and the importance of international collaboration between allies.

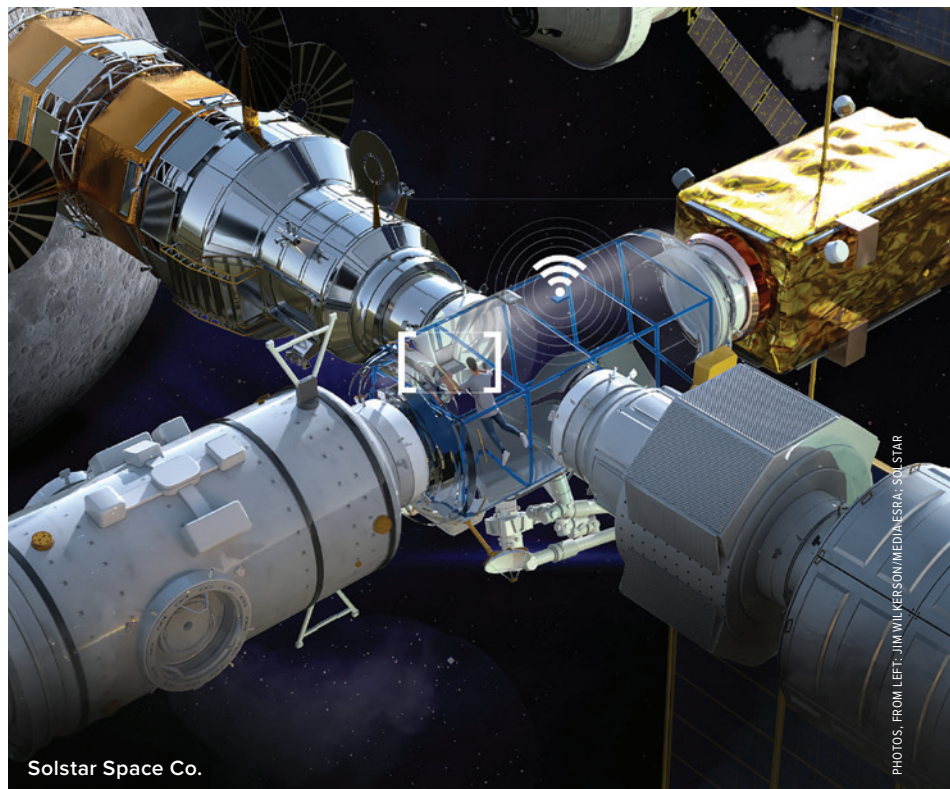
For Obruta, the program supports

our entrance into the U.S. market with many resources, including consulting, networking and business development opportunities,” says Kevin Stadnyk, CEO of Obruta Space Solutions.

Obruta’s autonomous RPOD technology is a key capability required across many emerging in-space industry segments, while also having applications for space situational awareness and space traffic management. Those industries include satellite refueling, life extension, inspection, component repair and replacement, space debris removal, reusable logistics vehicles, resupply, and transportation to space stations, as well as lunar landing and return.

“By enabling business activities across all of these markets, Obruta attracts companies seeking to leverage our technology and can help establish New Mexico as a key location for companies operating in the emerging in-space economy,” Stadnyk says.

– Bill Lewis



Solstar Space Co.

PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: JIM WILKINSON/MEDIA/ESRA, SOLSTAR

Space Travelers IN TRAINING

Programs prepare civilians for the space industry

New Mexico has more than 140 companies in the space industry, and it's easy to see why. Advantages for space-related firms doing business in New Mexico include access to restricted air space, plenty of open land, an ideal climate with clear skies, and top research institutions that employ experienced talent. The state also boasts a strategic location for manufacturing operations, a lower cost of doing business, and a high percentage of its total workforce performing STEM jobs.

Space, aerospace and defense operations are all enjoying success in the Land of Enchantment, with advanced manufacturing firms producing everything from solar-powered satellites to space parts that landed on Mars.

One of the leading space companies in New Mexico is Virgin Galactic, which in 2023 began launching commercial flights aboard rocket planes that take civilian passengers to altitudes of about 53 miles. NASA categorizes astronauts as anyone who has flown at an altitude of 50 miles or higher, and Virgin Galactic has more than 600 space enthusiasts signed up for future flights at a cost of \$250,000 per person.

Astronaut Campus

Also making news at Virgin Galactic is the planned construction of a first-of-its-kind astronaut campus and training facility to be located at Spaceport America, where Virgin Galactic is a tenant. When built, the Sierra County campus will be used for Virgin Galactic's future



NewSpace Nexus' Pathways to the Stars program

astronauts in training and up to three of their guests.

The campus will feature overnight accommodations, a wellness center, an observatory, training facilities, dining options and recreation activities. The plan is for astronauts and their guests to stay on the campus for five nights, before the commercial space flight.

"At Virgin Galactic, the road to space begins in New Mexico," Blair Rich, Virgin Galactic president and chief business officer, said in a press release. "While our future astronauts are completing spaceflight training, their guests will live out a tailored itinerary of discovery and educational experiences on our campus and throughout southern New Mexico."

Student Space Programs

Also involved with training future space travelers is NewSpace Nexus, an Albuquerque-based nonprofit that plans to introduce a new

Pathways to the Stars program to inspire more students to become part of the future space workforce.

"We are currently mapping out Pathways programs that will keep students inspired and interested about the space industry as they keep advancing in their education," says Casey Anglada DeRaad, NewSpace Nexus founder & CEO.

DeRaad says a big part of the Pathways program will be getting additional New Mexico space and aerospace companies involved to offer student internships, serve as mentors for middle school students, fund additional programs and provide career connection paths.

"We have numerous assets in New Mexico, and we want to keep many students on a path toward top careers in space," she says. "Our mission at NewSpace Nexus is to grow the new space economy from New Mexico – for the nation."

– Kevin Litwin

OPEN *FOR BUSINESS*

Native American entrepreneurs find support from incubators and each other in New Mexico



Kelly Holmes, CEO and editor-in-chief of Native Max

New Mexico's Native American population and culture is a key part of the state's identity. By opening up shop, Native American entrepreneurs are creating more economic opportunities for their own communities, while also encouraging clients and consumers to learn more about their culture.

Artisans at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, for instance, seek to provide tangible Pueblo experiences. Then, there's organizations like Creative Startups, which offers resources and guidance for Native American entrepreneurs.

INDIGENOUS INNOVATION

Kelly Holmes, CEO and editor-in-chief of Native Max, a digital media company, hosts the Creatives Indigenous Innovation Challenge alongside Creative Startups. The program provides a six-week accelerator program for Native entrepreneurs, artists, innovators and visionaries looking to disrupt the status quo and put Native creativity at the forefront of the business world.

"In the challenge, our participants work together and connect with world-class Native business mentors, collaborate with a cohort of like-minded Native creatives, and engage in an intensive, hands-on business-ed program," says Brenna Ortiz, program support/director of Creatives Indigenous.

Holmes says representation is just as important for entrepreneurial



Sweet Sage Woman, a Creatives Indigenous program participant

support programming as it is in media. The inspiration for her fashion magazine that puts Native designs and culture in the limelight was feeling excluded when she was a model. Holmes says she relied on free resources when she wanted to learn how to build a business, "but I didn't feel represented because my business idea was so niche. Content centered on Indigenous business owners was hard to find."

Ortiz says it's important to support Indigenous entrepreneurs in the creative sector because, oftentimes, there is a lot of cultural appropriation happening.

"With non-Native artists and business owners profiting from a culture that doesn't belong to

them, it not only shows a lack of respect for the community, but it's also exploitation," Ortiz says. "The purpose of Creatives Indigenous is to put Native creators in the limelight and provide an accessible business-ed course to propel them into the business world. Most of our participants have never attended business school, but they leave our program prepared to take their business to the next level."

DOMINO EFFECT OF INSPIRATION

Tsailii Rogers, a program participant who is Diné (Navajo) and Latina, founded Silent T Productions, a social impact production company.

"The purpose of Creatives Indigenous is to put Native creators in the limelight and provide an accessible business-ed course to propel them into the business world."

– Brenna Ortiz, Creatives Indigenous





POWERFULLY GOOD

Sandia National Laboratories program brings clean energy to remote American Indian tribes

A current program at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque connects American Indian tribal governments in remote regions with viable electricity solutions. At the same time, Sandia is also training a new generation of American Indian college interns to be renewable energy advocates.

“We have offered a Tribal Internship Program since 2002 and welcomed our 50th American Indian intern in 2023,” says Sandra Begay, engineer and principal member of the Sandia National Laboratories technical staff. “I hire interns who are juniors, seniors and college grad students, all of whom have extensive STEM academic backgrounds.”

The object of the Tribal Internship Program is for American Indian interns to join Begay and visit tribal leaders, talking to each leader about growing their individual tribal nation’s renewable energy capacity.

“Many tribes these days are doing an energy transition from coal and mineral-based fossil fuels to renewable clean energy

installations, such as solar panels, on their tribal lands,” Begay says. “Students accompany me and learn about the funding, bureaucracy and other real-life hurdles that go into putting renewable energy in Indian country.”

Begay, who is also a member of the Navajo Nation, says during the program’s 21-year history, student interns have been recruited nationally from about 20 different American Indian tribes, and about 67% of the students have been women.

“I’ve kept in touch with many intern students over the years, and several are now working at careers in clean energy,” she says. “One is a professor teaching wind energy at Northern Arizona University, another is a professor at The University of New Mexico working in water resources, and three interns started their own business in Flagstaff manufacturing off-grid solar units. It’s great to see so many of them doing so well.”

– Kevin Litwin

“The entertainment industry holds immense power in shaping societal perceptions and influencing culture,” Rogers says. “However, despite progress, Indigenous representation is still marred by harmful stereotypes, failing to capture the rich diversity of Natives. The time has come for Indigenous storytellers to reclaim their narratives, ones that resonate with and inspire future generations, fostering positive change. Together, we can celebrate diversity and embrace stories that honor the beauty and uniqueness of Indigenous cultures.”

Working with Creative Startups, Holmes pays it forward to fellow business owners.

“I got to learn more about [Native entrepreneurs’] businesses and guide them, sharing information I wish I had when I was at that stage myself,” she says.

Holmes says she worked with Pueblo beadwork artist and Indigenous fashion designer Sage Mountainflower.

“She’s talented, but she was hitting roadblocks with launching her brand, and I offered to help her get her name out there,” Holmes says. “We promoted her story and beautiful works. I’m happy to still be working with her.”

Collaborations like this are common.

“Many of our participants work together and build a strong network amongst each other. They exchange ideas, help each other innovate, develop new projects together, and most importantly, create new job opportunities within their communities,” Ortiz says. “There is definitely a domino effect of inspiration within all of our cohorts.”

The support and resources for Native entrepreneurs in New Mexico are vast.

“Other Native organizations are there that support Native entrepreneurs,” says Holmes, who launched her magazine with a fashion show in New Mexico. “It feels comfortable for me to work in New Mexico.”

– Val Hunt Beerbower



YOU'RE GOING TO *Santa Fe!*

Follow your heart to Santa Fe County, where you'll find culture, outdoor recreation and a supportive business environment

Santa Fe County is the heart of New Mexico, accessible by numerous daily flights to and from nearby airports. It's a place where you'll love to live, work and play. The city and surrounding area have so much to offer that there's sure to be something here that will capture your heart.

"Santa Fe County has world-class museums and culture, year-round outdoor recreation adventures and the best food you'll find anywhere. But it's the people that make it unique and special," says Santa Fe County Manager Gregory S. Shaffer.

Santa Fe County is a great place to call home and raise a family. With abundant natural resources, family-oriented activities, entertainment and history, the county provides



the right work/life balance and offers a good quality of life.

So when work ends, it's time to play in Santa Fe. The area has a range of outdoor recreational activities for the adventurous at heart, including skiing, rafting, biking and horseback riding.

Business assistance and work-force development programs, business relocation incentives and access to two prestigious national laboratories for technical assistance make a business relocation decision a breeze. You and your staff will be enjoying the wonderful outdoors in no time.

Hungry? There are plenty of restaurants featuring a variety of eclectic and vegetarian world cuisines, brew pubs, wineries, distilleries and more. Industry professionals and foodies from around the world flock to the annual International

Wine and Chile Fiesta every September/October.

Santa Fe County is home to the second-largest arts community in the country, with galleries featuring all forms of studio art, along with outdoor theater and museums. The Traditional Spanish Market, Indian Market and International Folk Art Market draw thousands of visitors every year.

Finally, Santa Fe also offers a diverse music scene. From funk to flamenco, there's always something playing here, including free open-air concerts all summer, the Santa Fe Opera, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the symphony orchestra.

When considering a move to relocate, expand or start your business, is Santa Fe County the right place for your company? You'll know it in your heart.

Industry professionals and foodies from around the world flock to the annual International Wine and Chile Fiesta every September/October.

Women

New Mexico welcomes diversity in the C-suite

WHO LEAD

One of New Mexico's advantages lies in identifying workforce talent and leveraging that talent for unique work opportunities. For years, it has valued the skills that women bring to the business world. Today, 46.1% of top executive positions are held by women, the highest percentage of any state

in the country, according to the American Community Survey.

Elizabeth Kuuttilla, CEO of The University of New Mexico (UNM) Rainforest Innovations, credits the diversity of its population – about half of which are of Hispanic heritage – for contributing to the welcoming business atmosphere.

“As a minority-majority region, we have learned to have a tolerance

and a collegial atmosphere involving many types of people in the business community,” Kuuttilla says.

Kuuttilla, whose engineering and tech career led her first to Silicon Valley and then into higher education, found her niche specializing in intellectual property licensing and tech transfer. She now heads the business incubator UNM Rainforest Innovations, which is owned by the UNM Board of Regents and is located in downtown Albuquerque.

STEM Stars Step Up

According to Kuuttilla, the robust innovation and research atmosphere in New Mexico is especially good for women in scientific and tech sectors.

“Our state is ranked ninth nationally for women in tech,” Kuuttilla says. “And we have the nation's fourth-lowest gender pay gap.”

Seconding that is another top executive, Catharine Reid, chief marketing officer for the multinational energy company BayoTech, which sprung up locally with ties to Sandia National Laboratories. Over the past decade, BayoTech has maintained



a large New Mexico presence, Reid says.

The company's 18,000-square-foot product development center in Albuquerque supports the company's patented hydrogen production technology – and more investment is planned.

Reputation for Human Resources

A skilled workforce in New Mexico has been a draw for the company to expand in the region, Reid says, and that includes the talents of many executive women.

“BayoTech wants a diverse and balanced workforce, so we are serious about hiring women and helping them rise in their careers,” she says. In addition to Reid, top female executives at BayoTech include the heads of human resources and finance.

Wings to Soar

Another advantage for female executives in the region is a solid network of support – not only for those in the CEO spot but also aspiring women leaders.

As the home state of NAWBO (the National Association of Women Business Owners), New Mexico offers dozens of career development resources, many aimed at women on the rise, including the e-Women Network and the Women in Leadership Program. Housed at Anderson School of Management at the University of New Mexico, the Leadership Program offers enrichment and for-credit courses.

Kuuttilla says, in her position at the university, she sees a lot of inventors, entrepreneurs and scientists take their ideas from concept to market.

Assistance is provided to help patent their discoveries, seek interested investors, and take

initial steps toward marketing and production.

The university ranked second nationally for innovation and impact in a recent survey. A 2023 WalletHub poll ranked New Mexico No. 13 among states based on volume of innovation.

“It's a great location for women because of all the opportunities,” she says.

Innovation All Around

Employers extending those opportunities include more than a dozen high-level research organizations and agencies in the state, such as Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, Array Operations Center for the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Socorro and others.

Entrepreneurship is another area where women stand out. Small business accounts for more than 99% of businesses overall, and in New Mexico, women own 47% of these businesses – exceeding the national average by more than 5%, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

State officials also note that New Mexico's family-friendly business policies can be a boon to women as they establish their careers and expand their roles at the company. These policies support parental leave, career development for female leadership, hybrid work options and other practical ways of overcoming traditional hurdles for women.

– Renee Elder

Learn more about how the state supports women in business at livability.com/nm.



“Our state is ranked ninth nationally for women in tech. And we have the nation's fourth-lowest gender pay gap.”

– Elizabeth Kuuttilla, UNM Rainforest Innovations



“BayoTech wants a diverse and balanced workforce, so we are serious about hiring women and helping them rise in their careers.”

– Catharine Reid, BayoTech

Outdoor Enthusiasts **MEAN BUSINESS**

Opportunities abound in this diverse, natural playground



Tom Mitchell, founder of SouthWest Teardrop Co., manufactures a classic-style teardrop camper.

If you've seen a TV show or movie filmed in New Mexico, you likely remember the dramatic scenery. The landscape becomes another character. Nature is a big part of what makes New Mexico special. Its mountains, rivers, national and state parks, monuments and recreational areas draw in outdoor fans.

"Many people associate New Mexico with solely being a desert, so when visiting for the first time, they're often taken aback by the breadth of landscapes and the countless ways to recreate," says AJ Jones, deputy director for New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division.

Some visitors are so impressed that they stay.

"I would say it's the landscape that attracted me initially, then the friendliness of the people and the art," says Tom Mitchell, who moved to New Mexico a couple years ago and started SouthWest Teardrop Company. "We custom build the classic style of teardrop camper from the 1940s. It's sleek and retains almost an art-deco feel."

And while Mitchell considered other

New Mexico locations, he ultimately chose the state's largest city. "The No. 1 business reason is that we are the only true teardrop manufacturer in Albuquerque, the hub of the state."

BUSINESS IS AS VARIED AS THE TERRAIN

Outdoor-recreation businesses are located all over the state. In Albuquerque, San Juan Rodworks handcrafts custom fly rods. A few hours north, the ovens at Taos Bakes make backpack snacks, like cilantro lime pistachios. Bicycle Technologies International (BTI), a bicycle parts distribution company that touts being a "progressive voice for the sport of cycling both on and off road," is headquartered in Santa Fe.

Jack's Plastic Welding set up shop in Aztec, where it manufactures inflatable boats, dry bags and waterproof self-inflating mattresses.

"Our employees have either come to us with a love of the outdoors or have fostered that love through regular river trips," says TJ Garcia, who handles design for Jack's Plastic Welding and moved to Aztec about seven years ago. "I love the ability to pack up and go do something new nearly every weekend. I have two young children, and I'm excited to show them the history of our area, whether it's taking them to some of the local historical ruins or helping them foster a love of the outdoors."

Jack's Plastic Welding has expanded its services to work with other



PHOTOS: SERGIO SALVADOR





Jack's
Plastic
Welding

industries, including NASA and aviation, oil, and gas companies. "For us, the vast majority of our sales are made out of state. By bringing that money home, we can bring real and sustained positive improvements to our communities," Garcia says.

WHY OUTDOOR REC IS WORTHY OF INVESTMENT

"Outdoor recreation is of high value to New Mexicans," Jones says. "Seventy-six percent consider themselves an outdoor recreation enthusiast, and 70% believe that ensuring opportunities for outdoor recreation is important."

New Mexico's outdoors are also significant

when it comes to generating dollars for the state.

"In 2022, the outdoor economy contributed \$2.3 billion to the state's GDP. It employed 28,475 New Mexicans with \$1.2 billion in income," Jones says. "We now rank fifth in the nation for employment growth in the industry."

But competition is stiff.

"Often what sets New Mexico apart from some of our neighboring states is the low population density and large expanse of public lands that make it easy to get outside and find solitude in the wilderness," Jones says.



Taos Bakes

In 2019, the Outdoor Recreation Division was created to focus on growing the outdoor economy. It offers a robust set of resources, funding opportunities and tools. The division hosts incubator and accelerator programs, and the Outdoor

Recreation Trails+ Grant supports projects that enhance communities' recreation opportunities. So far, the grant has funded 90 projects, creating 500 jobs. It's also helped 40,000 underserved New Mexican youth experience transformative outdoor adventures. In addition to improving quality of life, introducing residents to unfamiliar outdoor activities potentially creates new consumers as well as future employees and business owners.

"Outdoor recreation is of high value to New Mexicans. Seventy-six percent consider themselves an outdoor recreation enthusiast, and 70% believe that ensuring opportunities for outdoor recreation is important."

– AJ Jones, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division

– Greg Phillips

The Winner is TruFit

APP ENTREPRENEUR WINS \$10,000 IN ANNUAL ADVENTURE PITCH COMPETITION

Outdoor recreation is a growing industry in New Mexico, and the state sponsors an annual Adventure Pitch competition for entrepreneurs wanting to “pitch” their recreation ideas to earn money. The first-place winner is awarded \$10,000, while second place wins \$3,000 and third place receives \$2,000. Tijeras resident Adam White captured first place at the 2022 Adventure Pitch contest with his startup TruFit.

Tell us about TruFit.

My brother, John, and I developed a TruFit app that provides fitness and health and wellness programs for people with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities. John is a personal trainer who often works with the disabled, and the app provides customized programming designed for each disabled individual.

Can you give an example of the customized programming?

If you are in a wheelchair, you would check boxes on the app

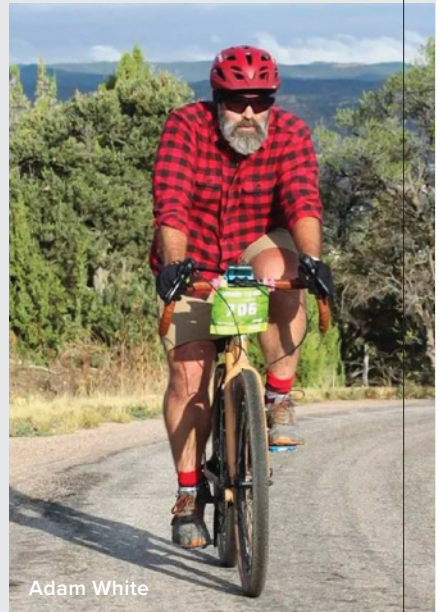
that go along with exercises that are categorized as seated adaptive, thereby removing activities like running and rock climbing and anything else that wouldn't apply to that individual person.

How many customers do you have?

We're a young company with about 500 customers in our first few months, and we have already partnered with Western Sky Community Care health insurance company in New Mexico, which now offers our program to their Medicaid members with disabilities. We've also partnered with Presbyterian Health Plan in New Mexico that offers TruFit to several of their members.

Did you enjoy the Adventure Pitch competition?

I was one of the last people to make the pitch for my company, so I watched most of the other contestants who made great pitches before me. There was



Adam White

no way that I thought I'd win, so I was shocked when it happened.

What do you like about New Mexico's outdoor recreation scene?

New Mexico has a nice climate, and I like hiking, backpacking and mountain biking because I was in the Scouts growing up. My daughter, Hannah, also loves the outdoors here.

Find more information about TruFit at GetTruFit.com.

By Kevin Litwin

PHOTO: TRUFIT

AREA
Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN
GREATER ALBUQUERQUE

ABQ.ORG | ABQSITES.COM | 505-705-3777

Water, wastewater and natural gas services for communities across the Southwest.

1-800-383-0834
epcor.com



PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/MARGARET WIKTOR; HOBBS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (2/3)





From music to mountains, New Mexico's small towns offer an idyllic lifestyle.



The Good LIFE

New Mexico's small towns offer a rich way of life

New Mexico has a tendency to charm visitors who eventually put down roots here. Residents benefit from a low cost of living in a state that's known for its majestic landscapes and natural amenities, from the colorful mesas to the bubbling hot springs, as well as the serene, auburn desert and dark, star-studded skies.

When you factor in rich outdoor experiences, exciting employment opportunities in cutting-edge industries and deep-rooted cultural traditions, it's easy to see the robust appeal of life in New Mexico.

Beyond the state's well-known, visitor-loved cities are smaller communities with populations under 40,000, where New Mexico's culture runs deep. Ahead, discover three New Mexico communities where residents enjoy plenty of room to roam.

Hobbs

Located in the southeast corner of New Mexico and close to the Texas state line, Hobbs is a friendly, high-desert community with cowboy legends, rich Hispanic culture and community events that bring neighbors together.

Hobbs residents appreciate the balance of big-city amenities and small-town feel.

"There's tons of great food here, from national chains to our local restaurants and breweries that do an amazing job," says Aaron Ward, who moved to New Mexico five years ago with his wife and

four kids after retiring from the U.S. Air Force. "There are also lots of employment opportunities, especially with oilfield work and oilfield support. On top of all that, the people in Hobbs still have that small-town appreciation for each other."

Ward, a car dealership general manager and the chairman of the Hobbs Chamber of Commerce, also touts the area's amenities, from the top-ranked public Rockwind Community Links to the Center of Recreational Excellence, which is a state-of-the-art gym with an Olympic-size swimming pool, an indoor water park, a playground and a track. Hobbs is also all about hoops – there's even a waiting list for tickets to watch the high school basketball team play, an indicator of how supportive the community is, Ward points out.

From a well-established rodeo to community events like August Nites (a car show and cruise) and the February Beer & Wine Festival, Hobbs residents can always find something fun to do, Ward says.

Los Lunas

Lots of people are surprised that Los Lunas is actually a village. Those who live here enjoy views of the Manzano Mountains and have access to historic and cultural sites, including Spanish Colonial-era ruins and the Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts. There are also plenty of great local restaurants as well as hiking trails. Plus,

Off the BEATEN PATH

Eight small-town experiences
throughout New Mexico



Farmington

1 Through the Flower Art Space is the creative heartbeat of Belen. Here, art lovers can get a rare glimpse of the life and work of feminist artist Judy Chicago and view rotating art exhibitions. Across the street, sip wine (including reds dedicated to Judy Chicago) at **Jaramillo Vineyards'** tasting room.

2 Hot pepper lovers from around the country converge in Hatch on Labor Day weekend to celebrate the world-famous **Hatch Chile Festival**. The festival is a chance to sample chile from that year's harvest and chile recipes – if you can take the heat.

3 Legend has it Norman Smith, a miner and general store owner, baked pies for westbound travelers in the 1920s and '30s, giving way to the name of Pie Town. **The Pie Town Pie Festival** takes place the second Saturday in September. The rest of the year, though, you can get your fill at **Pie-O-Neer**. The pie puns don't stop there; people refer to the route to town on Highway 60 as "PieWay 60."

4 The springtime **Clovis Music Festival** is worth planning your trip around. The festival brings big-name acts to the Curry County Events Center. Leading up to the main Friday and Saturday night concerts, local bands play at venues throughout Clovis.

5 Outdoor lovers will find plenty of adventures close by in Farmington, from fly fishing to mountain biking. This area is a great launching point for exploring the state's cultural parks and monuments, including **Shiprock and Chaco Culture National Historic Park**, which is known as the center of the ancient world.

6 Time travel to Tucumcari, where **Mesalands Community College's Dinosaur Museum** is home to the world's largest collection of bronze skeletons and fossils. Museumgoers can also visit the **New Mexico Route 66 Museum**.

7 The **Historic Plaza Hotel** in Las Vegas was known as the "Belle of the Southwest" when its doors first swung open in 1882. Spend the night in a lovingly restored Victorian guest room overlooking **Plaza Park** or enjoy some New Mexican fare like Frito pie at **Prairie Hill Café**.

8 The Gallup MainStreet Arts & Cultural District is filled with artist studios, music venues and the historic **El Morro Theatre**, a historic Spanish Colonial-style theater that shows movies. Every second Saturday, the **Gallup Arts Crawl** takes place, and in the summer, there are nightly Native American dances.

Albuquerque's amenities are just 20 minutes away.

Tractor Brewing, which brings the community together to enjoy local beers, craft cocktails and barbecue, was founded in Los Lunas in 1999, then moved its brewing operation to Albuquerque in 2014. A few years ago, with a desire to "head back to its roots," Tractor Brewing reopened in Los Lunas, says Jeremy Kinter, events and marketing director. The community, he says, is enthusiastic about supporting local businesses.

On any given night, neighbors gather for karaoke, live music and open mic nights, while enjoying seasonal cocktails and ciders, IPAs, and stouts.

Clovis

Chris Egbert and his family moved to Clovis a decade ago when he was stationed at Cannon Air Force Base. When he retired in 2018, he and his family enthusiastically decided to stay.

"We love it here," says Egbert, the founder of Operation Phoenix Outdoors, a nonprofit that gives back to veterans, military personnel and first responders by using the outdoors as therapy. "There are outstanding people who support the base and the military, plus beautiful sunsets and great schools."

His sons have participated in the marching band, which is on a hot streak, with a long tradition of winning the high school championships.

Egbert says Clovis has wide open spaces for outdoors lovers, like trout lakes and beautiful parks, and there's always something going on in town, including parades, concerts, rodeos at the events center and softball tournaments.

"The Fourth of July fireworks are the best I've ever seen," Egbert says.

– Brittany Anas

Energy EXPERTS

Farmington is leading the charge in the future of energy

For decades, the San Juan Basin has been a notable natural gas provider. Years of being an energy leader in electric generation, natural gas extraction and energy education has resulted in a concentration of highly talented individuals with very specialized skill sets.

Farmington is staying ahead of the curve and looking toward the future, and its workforce is proving up to the task of energy generation and exploration.

The community's newest focus is on hydrogen – a cleaner energy source that doesn't produce emissions – and is actively contributing to a four-state coalition competing for one of the federal government's Hydrogen Hub projects, which could garner billions of dollars in investment for the region.

"We want to take the skill and expertise we have in the region and point them in a new, vibrant direction, all while providing new jobs and educational opportunities," says Warren Unsicker, director of economic development for the city of Farmington.

In fact, the San Juan College School of Energy has been awarded a federal grant to provide hydrogen training that will be available and



The Farmington region is an important player in the energy arena.

applicable to upcoming, displaced and veteran workforce, and will be a stackable credential.

"We already have an established history of teaching how to produce and manage energy that is sought after nationally," notes Alicia Corbell, dean of the School of Energy.

Four Corners Economic Development, of which Farmington is a stakeholder, recently proposed a partnership program with the Navajo Agricultural Project Industry to host a pilot program that would create a commercial-scale agricultural test farm.

The project would be completely carbon sequestered with a goal of

being carbon negative. Per its Interim CEO, Scott Bird: "The regional assets that San Juan County has to offer make us a major player in the hydrogen energy industry."

Across the board, the city of Farmington and the region are proactively pivoting to apply its already strong base of highly skilled workers to the clean energy frontier.

"The expertise that we bring to the table is the perfect fit for the future of energy," Unsicker concludes.

Learn more about the city of Farmington at fntn.org. Learn more about regional economic development efforts at 4cornersed.com.

"Farmington is staying ahead of the curve and looking toward the future."



Movie Magic

Film production thrives in the Land of Enchantment



Across New Mexico, film production is thriving. From blockbuster movies and hit television series to independent projects, New Mexico is one of the leading states for film production, not to mention it's equipped with a savvy workforce and offers competitive film incentives.

Poised for Success

With 21 production facilities across the state and a highly qualified local crew, New Mexico has an impressive infrastructure in place, with the numbers to back it up. A record \$855.4 million was spent by the film industry in New Mexico from 2021 to 2022. Financial incentives have also been instrumental in bringing productions to the area.

“Over the last 20 years, New Mexico’s film incentive program has made the state a premier destination for film and television productions,” says

Dolores Martinez, a spokesperson for the New Mexico Film Office. The Film Office helps connect productions with local resources, training programs for their crew tax incentives and logistical aid.

New Mexico’s Film Tax Credit offers an up to 40% reimbursement for productions that utilize local facilities and crews. When productions take advantage of local incentives, it not only benefits the company, but the local economy. Data from the Film Office shows that the return on investment from every dollar spent through the tax incentive program is 8.4%, not to mention the creation of jobs.

Fueling Production

828 Productions is one of three New Mexico film partners, alongside Netflix and NBCUniversal. The full-service production and finance company recently relocated to

Las Cruces to broaden its foothold in the industry.

“828 Productions was founded to help artists tell their stories across genres, big or small,” says Todd Lundbohm, founder and CEO of 828 productions. “Moving to Las Cruces is not just a relocation; it is our launch pad for expansion.”

As part of the expansion, 828 Productions will provide soundstages and backlots for filming and be home to the second New Mexico Media Academy location in the state, in addition to the campus in Albuquerque. The Media Academy seeks to equip New Mexico residents with skills that will help them enter the workforce.

“As with any efforts to attract and retain this industry, a trained workforce is a top component,” Lundbohm says.



Film students can find opportunities through universities, statewide programs and several other film-focused initiatives.

Right for the Job

The Film Crew Advancement Program (FCAP) through the New Mexico Film Office provides additional incentives for productions while helping further the careers of crew members. Qualifying films can be reimbursed for 50% of an eligible employee's wages through the program. Crew members in technical positions can rise through the ranks in their departments, increasing their wages and experience levels.

"We are committed to supporting the local workforce with ongoing industry training and education opportunities," Martinez says.

Yvette Tapp is a New Mexico resident and an FCAP participant whose career has benefitted from the program. Starting out as a film accounting clerk, Tapp furthered her career with help from FCAP. Now, her resume includes work on the sets of "Dark Winds," "Crazy Heart" and "The Avengers." Forming relationships on these productions has led to even more jobs.

"People get to know each other. They might work with somebody and turn to them again and again," Tapp says.

Through FCAP, New Mexico veterans can find opportunities with Operation Soundstage (OSS). Skills learned in the military can carry over to film sets, whether it be technical knowledge or a strong work ethic. In partnership with the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, the Film Office seeks to promote and provide training for veterans through OSS. As an added benefit, veterans seeking to join the local film union, IATSE Local 480, will receive a significant discount on their initiation fees.

Along with great incentives and qualified crews, New Mexico's natural beauty has a big part to play in drawing productions to the area, making it an ideal place to work as well as film.

"A lot of people fall in love with New Mexico, whether they're in the film industry or not," Tapp says. "But if they come to New Mexico to work [in film], and they fall in love with it, they have the best of everything, because they love the enchantment and they love working in film."

— Wesley Broome

A NATURAL BACKDROP

Five films shot in New Mexico

HELL OR HIGH WATER

Jeff Bridges stars as a Texas ranger in the 2016 crime drama bent on tracking down a bank robber played by Chris Pine. The sparse landscapes of Quay and Guadalupe Counties were used for rural backdrops, with additional scenes filmed in the cities of Clovis, Portales and Tucumcari.

THE LONE RANGER

Johnny Depp leads in the 2013 adaptation of "The Lone Ranger," directed by Gore Verbinski. The iconic cliffs and tall fir trees at Cimarron Canyon State Park are featured prominently throughout this modern-day take on the classic Lone Ranger character.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

The limestone caves at Carlsbad Caverns were a perfect setting for this 1959 classic film. Before the era of digital effects, the stalactites and calcite formations in the Carlsbad Caverns created the ideal atmosphere for this Jules Verne adventure.

THOR

Marvel Studios filmed parts of this Chris Hemsworth-led film in Galisteo and the Cerro Pelon Ranch, which was transformed into the fictional New Mexican town of Puente Antiguo for the film. The ranch, owned by fashion designer Tom Ford, has played host to several other films throughout the years.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

In 2020, Santa Fe was transported back to the 1870s for this feature starring Tom Hanks. Bonanza Creek Ranch was transformed into a frontier town in this adaptation of the Paulette Jiles novel of the same name, tracing the journey of a Civil War soldier and his unlikely companion across the West.

YOUR FLIGHT TO QUALITY

NOW LEASING: 500 Marquette Ave
Albuquerque NM 87102

3 Full Floors Available

4th: 9,087 SF

8th: 19,608 SF

15th (top): 17,837 SF

- ◆ 4 Story Granite Atrium Lobby
- ◆ Café, Gym & Game Room On Site
- ◆ Security is our priority
- ◆ 650 Car Garage

Smaller Suites Ranging From

1,000 SF - 10,000 SF

Free Space Planning

Generous Tenant Improvements



SCOTT THROCKMORTON, SIOR

✉ scott@argusinvestmentrealty.com

☎ 505.855.7602

Owner/Broker

STACEY NENNINGER, CCIM

✉ stacey@argusinvestmentrealty.com

☎ 505.855.7608

Economic Profile

10 LARGEST EMPLOYERS IN NEW MEXICO

Employees / Location

Sandia National Laboratories
15,100 / Albuquerque

Los Alamos National Laboratory
14,150 / Los Alamos

Amazon
3,500 / Albuquerque

Speridian Technologies
2,200 / Albuquerque

Intel
1,900 / Rio Rancho

Freeport Mc Mo Ran
1,400 / Silver City

Applied Research Associates
1,350 / Albuquerque

Navajo Agricultural Products Industry
1,200 / Farmington

Fidelity Investments
1,150 / Albuquerque

Safelite Auto Glass
950 / Rio Rancho

Sources: Census Reporter, U.S. Census, New Mexico Partnership

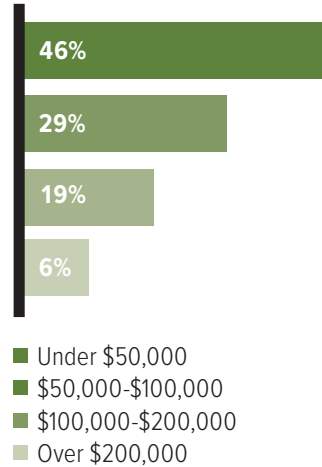
NEW MEXICO'S LARGEST INDUSTRY SECTORS

- » Advanced Manufacturing
- » Aerospace & Defense
- » Logistics, Warehousing & Distribution
- » Value-Added Agriculture
- » Business HQ, Support & Sales
- » Emerging Technologies
- » Energy & Natural Resources
- » IT & Data Centers

MAJOR TECH COMPANIES WITH OPERATIONS IN NEW MEXICO

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| » CALCULEX | » RS21 |
| » Descartes Labs | » Intel |
| » Meta | » SavantX |
| » General Dynamics | » Lavu |
| » Hewlett Packard | » Twistle |
| | » Ultramain |

HOUSEHOLD INCOME



FUN FACTS

- » More than **350,000 people** have relocated to New Mexico over the last five years.
- » The state averages about **12 residents per square mile**, boasting wide-open spaces.
- » It's no wonder New Mexico is called **the Land of Enchantment**, with natural tourism destinations like **three national parks, seven national forests and 32 state parks.**

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
LIVE UNITED 



Want to make a difference? Help create opportunities for everyone in your community. United Way is creating real, lasting change where you live, by focusing on the building blocks of a better life—education, income and health. That's what it means to Live United. For more, visit LIVEUNITED.ORG.

Ad Index

ALBUQUERQUE REGIONAL ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

ARGUS INVESTMENT REALTY, INC.

ARTESIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CIBOLA COMMUNITIES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

CITY OF FARMINGTON

CLOVIS/CURRY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

EDC OF LEA COUNTY

EPCOR USA

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

NEW MEXICO PARTNERSHIP

SANTA FE COUNTY

VILLAGE OF LOS LUNAS





New Mexico

where innovation thrives

New Mexico is the clear choice for companies looking to stand out from the competition. Our strategic assets including access to key markets and supply chains have helped a wide range of industries find success in New Mexico.



**Strategic
Location**



**Ideal Manufacturing
Environment**



**Center for
R&D**



**State Made
for Businesses**

Discover New Mexico

We're here to make the site selection process easy and we provide all of our services confidentially and free of charge. Let us show you what New Mexico has to offer. Contact us today.



nmpartnership.com
edd.newmexico.gov



EDD ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT