

NEW MEXICO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
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State invests in major Biosciences expansion; Pebble Labs set to bring hundreds of jobs to Los Alamos

SANTA FE, N.M. – The State of New Mexico is pledging at least \$4 million in economic development assistance to Pebble Labs USA Inc. to expand its Biosciences business in Los Alamos into a world-class research and development facility, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced Tuesday.

Pebble Labs plans to expand to more than 230 full-time employees. The company is managing research on food and crop safety, public health, and the reduction of the occurrence of vector-borne diseases including the Zika Virus. As part of the expansion announcement Tuesday, Pebble said it has reached a breakthrough in substantially reducing disease in farm-raised fish and shrimp throughout the world without the use of antibiotics.

“I am proud to be supporting homegrown businesses like Pebble Labs that are driving innovation and cutting-edge scientific research right here in New Mexico,” Gov. Lujan Grisham said. “By investing in promising industries like biosciences and technology, we are creating sustainable, high-paying jobs and growing our local economies. This is exactly the kind of business expansion and industry growth that will diversify the state’s economy and keep talented young adults here in New Mexico.”

Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes of the Economic Development Department said the State is pledging \$4 million in LEDA (Local Economic Development Act) funds to help with expansion of the Pebble campus, located in the Entrada Business Park. Pebble Labs was formed by a former Los Alamos National Laboratory scientist and plans to invest at least \$60 million in the next 10 years.

“New Mexico has stepped up with a major investment package to help ensure the success of Pebble Labs,” said Keyes. “The company promises to change the world with breakthroughs in food safety and disease research. The expansion will create good high-paying jobs in New Mexico.”

Keyes said Pebble also qualifies for up to \$3.25 million in employee training money from the State's Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), a grant that helps reimburse businesses for the cost of employee training. Pebble may also apply for future incentives such as the high-wage jobs tax credit. Both programs have application guidelines and benchmarks that would have to be satisfied.

Los Alamos County is assisting with the issuance of \$12.5 million in Industrial Revenue Bonds and will retain ownership of a portion of the property with Pebble, leasing the space back from the county until the bonds are paid.

Full-time workers at Pebble Labs, many with specialty PhD's, earn about \$130,000 and the company will spend \$20 million annually. The direct economic impact is expected to be \$577 million with over \$1 billion in total economic impact, both direct and induced.

"Pebble Labs is doing remarkable research, and not surprisingly, it's happening in Los Alamos, New Mexico, one the United States' centers of research excellence with one of the world's highest concentrations of PhD's," said Chief Executive Michael Harrison of Pebble Labs. "Pebble Labs is proud to be working with Los Alamos, Gov. Lujan Grisham, the State of New Mexico and the New Mexico Consortium to advance science for a better world. Our most recent breakthrough in substantially reducing disease in aquaculture is just one example of the innovations to come."

"Los Alamos County Council strongly supports this economic development initiative as evidenced by our recent unanimous vote. It builds on past investments and will impact Los Alamos County priorities including support for our local business environment and support for our schools; it will also have a positive impact on diversification of our regional economic base," said Los Alamos County Council Chair Sara Scott.

Pebble has several divisions – LittleFly focuses on insect-borne disease; MermaidBio on pathogens in aquaculture; and IronLeaf on growing food with fewer pesticides and less waste. Furthermore, its innovation division, called BenchWorks, brings scientists from several disciplines together to create and monetize intellectual property, either from licensing or creating spin-off companies.

The Pebble Labs expansion makes it more likely the new ventures will remain in New Mexico.

In addition to its expansion announcement on Tuesday, Pebble said it has used its patent-pending technology to reduce the transmission of white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) in shrimp. The study, soon to be published, is the first to successfully use bacteria expressing RNA interference molecules to block the replication and transmission of the virus in shrimp. Pebble's scientific advances promise to improve yields and reduce the use of antibiotics.

"This is a major breakthrough because it will increase the yield of shrimp farms and other food sources, such as salmon and even poultry and beef, without the over-use of antibiotics," said Dr. Richard Sayre, chief science officer. "On a planet that is soon to reach ten billion people, this promises to feed our population while reducing the use of chemicals and putting less stress on our ecosystems."

Pebble was started by Dr. Sayre who is a former Senior Scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory. His efforts to move the technology from LANL to private commercialization were assisted by The New Mexico Consortium, a non-profit started by the three research universities in New Mexico and LANL to further collaboration.

"The New Mexico Consortium is delighted to have helped Pebble Labs develop and grow through our incubator services for start-up companies. This mission-related activity has far exceeded our expectations," said Steven J. Buelow, New Mexico Consortium CEO.



Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announces \$4 million in economic development assistance to Pebble Labs today.



Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes of the Economic Development Dept. praises the public/private partnership that make ventures like this possible.

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For more information of Pebble Labs go to www.pebblelabs.com or contact Tom Carroll at tc@carrollstrategies.net 505-842-6600

For more information on the New Mexico Consortium go to www.newmexicoconsortium.org or contact Shannan Schnedler at 505-412-6898.

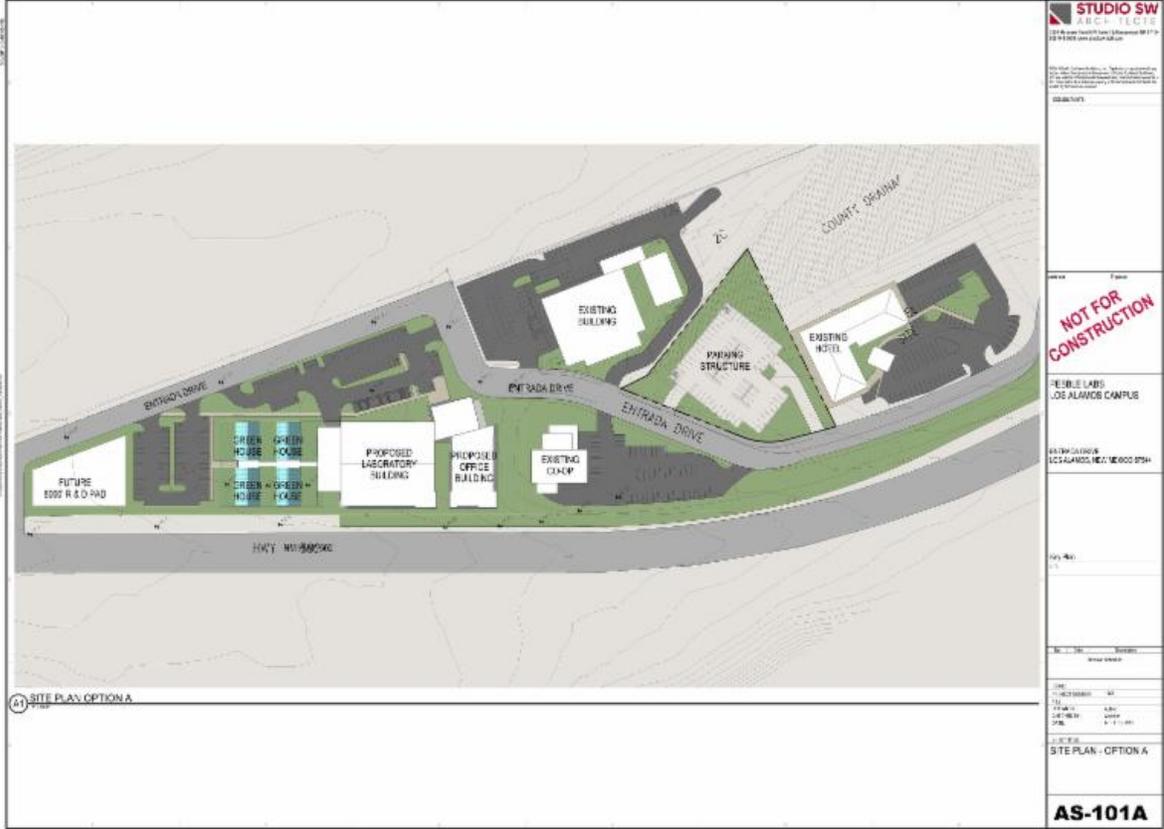


Image: Architectural rendering of Pebble Labs campus expansion

New Mexico Economic Development Department
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