



Office of the Governor

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**Rich Global Hemp opens Doña Ana facility
Company will create 180 jobs, boost plant research and education
with assistance from state economic development grants**

LAS CRUCES, N.M. -- The New Mexico Economic Development Department is pledging over \$2 million in assistance to a company that has started a hemp production business in Doña Ana County, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced Monday.

Rich Global Hemp Corp. has taken over a 750,000-square foot greenhouse business at 4884 S. Main St. in Las Cruces and plans to ramp up hemp plant production in the coming year, hiring up to 180 employees.

The company has not only developed a range of genetic strains of hemp to provide startup plants to farmers, but it is building a robust research operation aimed at identifying certain genetic markers of the plant and creating a certification program for feminized seeds. Some of that work is undertaken in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and New Mexico State University, including research opportunities for students.

The state has given tentative approval to a \$1.2 million grant for land, building and infrastructure from the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) program and up to \$1.4 million in job training (JTIP). Both amounts are contingent on the company meeting application guidelines and benchmarks. Doña Ana County is the fiscal agent for the LEDA award.

The project is expected to generate \$136 million in direct spending over the next 10 years with a total economic impact of \$247 million, according to an analysis by the state Economic Development Department. The average salary for the company is expected to be \$43,000. This is the first major economic development initiative in Doña Ana County under the new administration.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has targeted value-added agriculture as a key industry sector to grow as New Mexico diversifies its economy.

“This is only the beginning of the benefits that commercial hemp will bring to New Mexico’s value-added agriculture sector and economy as a whole,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “My administration is committed to supporting businesses and entrepreneurs that invest in New Mexico, and today’s announcement exemplifies the incredible economic potential that the hemp industry brings to the state.”

“Doña Ana County is the top agriculture producer in the state and this investment from the state LEDA fund will add 180 jobs to this vital sector in Southern New Mexico,” said Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes of the Economic Development Department. “New Mexico can be a great home to hemp as it is to Chile. We have the climate, the workforce and the culture for this industry to thrive.”

Joshua Rich, president of Rich Global Hemp, has operated and partnered in hemp and cannabis growing operations in California, Nevada and Oregon and worked as a liaison between patients and physicians to manage plants for treatment of pain, depression, inflammation and cancer.

Hemp is a strain of the *Cannabis sativa* plant species that is grown specifically for the industrial uses of its derived products. It can be refined into a variety of commercial items including paper, textiles, clothing, biodegradable plastics, paint, insulation, biofuel, food, and animal food. Hemp oil is cold-pressed from the seed and is high in unsaturated fatty acids. Hemp leaves are also edible and can be consumed raw or pressed to make juice.

New Mexico’s hot days and cooler nights provide an excellent climate for the plant, and Rich said New Mexico could be a top hemp-producing state. Introduced to farmers as a replacement for tobacco, Kentucky is the nation’s top hemp producing state.

Rich has met farmers across New Mexico, many in the dairy industry, who have expressed interest in growing hemp. “Some of the farmers really want this to occur as a replacement crop,” he said.

“We’re happy to have an experienced company come in to our state and embrace this opportunity. I believe we’ll see an emerging industry in health and wellness in New Mexico,” said New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte.

New Mexico State University Chancellor Dan Arvizu said the business is an example of “placed-based economic development that takes full advantage of our unique local agricultural base and leverages it with a new crop.”

Arvizu added that NMSU and its partners stand ready to work with other companies and entrepreneurs to grow local industry across the state.

“Hemp is a 21st-century crop that will complement New Mexico’s other agricultural exports like pecans, cheese, and chile,” said Tim Nitti, President and Chief executive of the New Mexico Partnership, which helped recruit the company to the state. “We’ve been working with this company since they first started actively considering New Mexico, and I’m excited about the tremendous technical expertise and industry knowledge they are bringing to the state.”

Davin Lopez, president and CEO of the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, said Rich Global Hemp is at the fore of hemp production and has unique expertise. He welcomes the company’s collaboration with New Mexico State University.

“Combined with NMSU’s expertise in agricultural sciences along with our rich agricultural heritage, Doña Ana County is uniquely positioned to grow a vertically integrated industry cluster that will provide new career opportunities for our students,” he said.

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