



EDD

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
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April 21, 2020

Beef Processing Plant set to open in Las Vegas, N.M. *High Plains Processing set to take over vacant facility, hire 20 employees*

LAS VEGAS, N.M. — The New Mexico Economic Development Department has pledged economic assistance to High Plains Processing LLC, a Colorado company that is expanding to Las Vegas, N.M. to open a meat processing business.

The company is investing \$1.6 million into a building at 27 Sale Barn Rd., Las Vegas, 87701 and set to refurbish the vacant facility with modern equipment, ventilation, waste collection, receiving, and refrigeration. High Plains plans to begin operations in the second half of 2020 and hire 20 employees over the next three years with a total annual payroll of \$655,200.

Owners Joanna and Chip Meston, a Colorado ranching couple, see the expansion into New Mexico as a way to integrate their business and provide processing services throughout the northeast part of the state.

"We will rebound from this pandemic and revitalize better than ever before because of strategic state investments and willing partners who want to be here," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said.

High Plains has identified restaurant, hospitality, and retail consumer markets in Asia and the United States for its products.

"New Mexico has a widespread and healthy livestock industry," Chip Meston said. "There are a lot of people who want to see this business succeed. We will be a value-added business in a community that values agriculture."

Johanna Meston is an anesthesiologist and the business is particularly mindful during construction to take precautions during the COVID-19 health emergency. The Mestons are still optimistic the business can open by summer.

The state of New Mexico has pledged \$100,000 from its LEDA closing fund to assist the business with land, building, and infrastructure improvements.

"We are seeing an uptick of companies that want to be in New Mexico," Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes of the Economic Development Department said. "It's more important than ever that we can still offer LEDA investments to help them grow and expand."

"Northeast New Mexico has a rich tradition of grazing and ranching," Keyes added, "and this investment will not only help create jobs in Las Vegas, but also give family ranches

more options as they look to diversify and sustain an agricultural lifestyle.”

San Miguel County is the fiscal agent for the LEDA grant.

“San Miguel County is excited that the facility will soon have new life. It will provide a much needed service and economic boost to the county, which will ultimately have a positive impact to the entire northeastern portion of the state,” Planning and Zoning Supervisor Alex Tafoya said.

The Mestons, owners of Fifteen Mile Ranch in Bennett, CO, said the Las Vegas location is a good fit for their expansion because of its proximity to Interstate 25 and nearby ranches. New Mexico’s incentives, labor force, and overall business climate will give them an opportunity to compete in a global market that is seeing significant demand for high-quality beef products.

“American beef is the best in the world and New Mexico has great incentives and a really good work force. We are glad to be able to move into an existing building with good infrastructure. The community and San Miguel County are really behind what we are trying to do,” Meston said.

“Livestock production continues to be an important economic driver across New Mexico. This new value-added processing facility will enhance our ability to increase locally-sourced beef for our consumers and provide marketing options for our producers,” New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte said. “This is another important value-added economic development opportunity that is a priority for this administration.”

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The Meston family has been involved in showing cattle at the National Western since the 1930s. In the last two years their entrants have placed well enough to receive ribbons for showing, presentation, record keeping and animal performance. When their children were younger they participated directly in the program, but now they are sponsoring one of the entrants annually, work with youth, and sponsor other activities.

The New Mexico Economic Development Department's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive.

New Mexico Economic Development Department
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