



EDD

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

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LOS POBLANOS GETS STATE FUNDING TO EXPAND

LEDA will support local farmers and growers throughout New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – The New Mexico Economic Development Department has pledged economic assistance to Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm to expand year-round manufacturing and boost purchases of agricultural products from New Mexico ranchers and growers, Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced today.

Los Poblanos currently purchases agriculture from 36 ranchers, farmers, and growers across the state. The NM Economic Development Department has pledged up to \$250,000 through the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) for the creation of 24 jobs within the next 5 years. Processing and storage will take place at its new Albuquerque location on 4th Street NW.

"This is a win-win for New Mexico manufacturing and agriculture," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said. "I'm excited about this expansion and what it means for farmers, ranchers, and growers all across our state. We will continue to seek out opportunities with partners like Los Poblanos to boost locally grown food and job creation."

"We all understand the importance of locally grown food, now more than ever," Cabinet Secretary Keyes said. "Investing in local agriculture will not only create jobs in New Mexico, it makes our communities safer and healthier."

Los Poblanos Executive Director Matt Rembe said their food, restaurant products, and hospitality business is focused on the "3 Ps" - People, Product and Planet. The new investments will help sustain its growers and improve the new downtown area community where it has established a footprint.

"This is very much about coming up with something that works for New Mexico," Rembe said. "LEDA really makes this possible now. We can now move ahead with 100 percent confidence. As soon as LEDA is approved, we can be up and running in the new space very soon."

The project includes 5,000 square feet of production space and 4,000 square feet of warehouse capacity for inventory, food storage, wholesale and retail sales, e-commerce, as well as administrative needs. It also expects to add a customer-friendly venue for distilled spirits and agri-tourism, which will generate foot traffic in the neighborhood. Los Poblanos's products are 90 percent organic and it purchases the majority of its agriculture from local farmers and growers.

"Los Poblanos's expansion and creative investment is a striking example of a project that

adds to the unique quality of life and attractive environment in our state and region. AED is honored to have been part of the city, state and regional efforts it takes to bring growth like this to fruition,” said Danielle Casey, President & CEO of Albuquerque Economic Development (AED).

Farmer Elan Silverblatt Buser of Silver Leaf Farms has been selling his organic hot peppers to Los Poblanos for years. He also grows butter lettuce, watercress, tomatoes, peppers, squash, and sweet potatoes on 20 acres in Corrales.

"As Los Poblanos has grown, we've grown, and they continued to support us through COVID," Buser said. "If they can buy more, we can definitely grow a lot more."

"Selling products to Los Poblanos is a significant part of our economic stability," said Jesse Davies of Amyo Farms, a family farm that specializes in quality no-pesticide produce in Bosque Farms and provides garlic, lettuce, root crops, and leafy greens to Los Poblanos.

Richard Schnieders is a former CEO and chairman of at Sysco Corp. He moved to New Mexico 12 years ago where he founded Southwest Grains, a non-profit that works with small growers helping them with new markets and sustainable yields.

Under the umbrella of the New Mexico State University Foundation, Southwest Grains has clients that range from Navajo families in the Northwest part of the state to growers in the communities around Las Cruces. What many small farms lack in New Mexico is the service Los Poblanos wants to provide – storing, processing, and packaging, Schnieders said.

"The infrastructure that used to support small and mid-sized growers in New Mexico is gone, so Los Poblanos becomes a huge piece of that," Schnieders said. With Los Poblanos "being able to store and process and package, it's going to be huge for us."

Southwest Grains has one grower experimenting with Sonoran white wheat, a robust versatile grain that can be used in bread, cakes, and brownies. The farmer can mill and package the grain on his property and then deliver it to Los Poblanos once they expand. There it would be processed and used by the bakery or restaurant, but also cut into smaller packages for direct-to-consumer sales.

"Agriculture is hard because it's so slow. It takes 4-5-6 months to get it in the ground, and if you want to make adjustments you have to wait until the next year," Schnieders said. "We believe if we can rebuild the infrastructure supply chain for these small and mid-size producers it can be beneficial to economic development in New Mexico. Los Poblanos is one of the keys to this."

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Photo Courtesy of Los Poblanos Historic Inn and Organic Farm



Photo Courtesy of Silver Leaf Farms

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.

