



EDD

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Bruce Krasnow

Bruce.Krasnow@state.nm.us

(505) 827-0226, cell: (505) 795-0119

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes
Deputy Secretary Jon Clark

Feb. 21, 2020

State Grant Assists Expansion at Doña Ana Hemp Farm *LEDA grants will create 56 jobs*

LAS CRUCES, N.M. – The New Mexico Economic Development Department will invest in a year-round hemp business that is expanding its operation from Berino to Las Cruces N.M and adding 56 jobs, Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said today.

The New Mexico Economic Development Department has committed \$600,000 in LEDA funds, matched by \$5.3 million in private investment, toward the expansion of Natural ReLeaf. The business began growing hemp in Berino last year with a 2019 crop yield of 10,000 pounds. It is now ready to expand manufacturing capacity and add 8 greenhouses in Berino to allow for year-round growing.

Natural ReLeaf will create 56 jobs in various aspects of production over the next 2-3 years. The company's manufacturing facility and primary dispensary is located at 3497 Bataan Memorial West in Las Cruces and it is scheduled to open by the end of February. Natural ReLeaf also sells product at its retail operation on Solano Drive and through other distributors in and out of the state. Sales of CBD products is in the billions of dollars nationally and grows each year.

Although sales growth is strong, it is an increasingly competitive market. Nicole Fuchs, Public Relations Manager at ReLeaf, believes two factors make their company unique in the growing market. First, it is a "seed to shelf" business that is unusual in hemp manufacturing, and, secondly, the company is immersed in the Doña Ana science community. Two interns from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture are working with Natural ReLeaf today: a horticulturalist and a chemical engineer.

The creation of new products is a team effort according to Fuchs. CBD truffles, in a variety of flavors, are currently very popular. The company sold chocolate-covered strawberries infused with CBD for Valentine's Day and is constantly introducing new products like bath balm, chapstick, and honey stix.

"Natural ReLeaf sees hemp as the future of agriculture, economic and job development," Fuchs stated. "New Mexico holds a lot of potential for the hemp industry: a long growing season, an abundance of sun, and a pool of talent that the hemp industry is waiting for - from plant scientists to brokers to chemical engineers. All of these factors together help Natural ReLeaf create the highest quality hemp flower and products."

The Economic Development Department invests in target industry sectors that will diversify the state's economy and create new wealth for New Mexicans. Value-added

agriculture is one of those industry sectors and hemp is the fastest growing subsector since it was legalized by the state legislature in 2019.

“Agriculture is part of our history and culture, and now hemp is providing new opportunities for family farms,” Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said.

Natural ReLeaf was assisted in its expansion by the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA). “We continue to see a surge in activity in the industrial hemp industry, and companies are continuing to make investments throughout Doña Ana County and Las Cruces,” MVEDA President CEO Davin Lopez said. “We are strategically creating a fully integrated industry, from cultivation, to advancement, to consumer product development. Natural ReLeaf exemplifies the opportunities we have to be leaders in an industry that has quickly already reached over \$1 billion in sales within the U.S. alone.”

Natural ReLeaf offers tours of the manufacturing facility in Las Cruces. Call 575.639.2272 for more information.

About LEDA: Over the last six years, funds provided through [LEDA](#) have supported the creation of over 11,000 new jobs and \$3 billion in new investment. To date, 34 communities have received LEDA investments to support economic growth.

###



Nicole Fuchs, Public Relations Manager at Natural ReLeaf, showing off the new facility at 3497 Bataan Memorial West in Las Cruces, scheduled to open by the end of this month.



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.