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ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

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Sceye Picks New Mexico For U.S. Production Center
*Company set to add 140 employees as airship technology bridges
broadband divide*

SANTA FE, N.M. – Sceye, a company founded by global humanitarian Mikkel Vestergaard, has chosen New Mexico as its U.S. base of stratospheric flights for earth observation and communication, Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced today.

With a staff of 30, Sceye has had a footprint in New Mexico for three years, conducting a large part of the research and development of its innovative technology at airports in both Roswell and Moriarty. The company has now decided to locate its manufacturing operation in New Mexico as well, at a location still being finalized. Sceye is deploying a stratospheric platform that enjoys a field of vision broad enough to transmit over thousands of square kilometers, but close enough in proximity to eliminate the need for ground infrastructure, thereby giving all communities equal access to the internet.

Sceye is negotiating a partnership deal that can provide better broadband access to the Navajo Nation and all underserved areas in New Mexico. Vestergaard will testify on broadband access on Tuesday, August 18, before the Interim Committee of the New Mexico Legislature on Science and Technology & Telecommunications

“The COVID emergency has amplified the need for universal access to the advantage of a networked world,” Vestergaard said. “There is a massive gap between the connected and unconnected.”

In January 2019, Vestergaard, former CEO of global public health companies Vestergaard and LifeStraw, established new leadership of his other businesses to exclusively focus on Sceye's expansion.

Sceye has invested more than \$50 million in developing and maturing the stratospheric airship and building infrastructure in New Mexico. The latest expansion will create 140 high-paying manufacturing and engineering jobs. To assist with expansion, the New Mexico Economic Development Department has pledged up to \$5 million from its Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) fund, a grant program funded by the Legislature to boost job creation in the state.

"Sceye's commitment to our state validates the hard work we've done to restore and rebuild New Mexico's business-friendly reputation. This is the place to be if you're interested in breaking ground and new frontiers and in meaningful career development," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said. "My administration will continue doing everything we can to attract and retain the innovative 21st century businesses that will strengthen our economy and workforce."

Sceye credits economic incentives as one of the factors in making the State of New Mexico a desirable location for doing business

"Our partnership with the Economic Development Department has helped us choose New Mexico, not just for research and development, but for a scaled production of our business in the future," Vestergaard said.

"New Mexico has been home to many innovative companies and Sceye's approach to broadband and methane monitoring is game changing," Cabinet Secretary Keyes said. "It's these types of disruptive companies that will drive economic development in the state for years to come."

Bringing Sceye to New Mexico and supporting the company has been a collaborative effort with Gov. Lujan Grisham, the Economic Development Department, the Environment Department, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Information Technology.

"This is a game changing application of science and technology that will allow real-time and remote monitoring of our environment," Environment Department Cabinet Secretary James Kenney said. "From validating atmospheric chemical models to quantifying ozone and methane emissions, this technology will allow us to make better policy-based decisions to improve air quality and reduce emissions that contribute to climate change."

"The expansion of broadband within the State of New Mexico is just as important to transportation as it is to education, safety, and health," Transportation Secretary Mike Sandoval added. "NMDOT is excited to collaborate with such an innovative organization and help address the broadband gaps in New Mexico."

Sceye will utilize expertise from Sandia National Labs, Air Force Research Lab, New Mexico Tech, New Mexico State University, the University of New Mexico, and others.

Sceye's airships operate in the stratosphere at 65,000 feet and have the potential to provide 100 percent broadband coverage to rural New Mexico, while simultaneously monitoring methane emissions, including the rate of emissions in real time. Sceye plans to continue testing the proof of concept at the Roswell Air Center in the coming months.

Sceye is only one of the space or satellite technology companies that are quickly relocating or expanding in New Mexico. At New Mexico's Spaceport America, SpinLaunch is testing its one-of-a-kind technology that would launch satellites into orbit with kinetic energy. The publicly-traded Virgin Galactic now has 150 employees in New Mexico as it prepares for commercial space flights. HapsMobile Inc., through a partnership with AeroVironment, has signed a Spaceport lease to test its unmanned, solar-powered telecommunications platform.

New Mexico lawmakers have consistently allocated money to LEDA, a closing or job-creation fund, to assist businesses with building, land, and infrastructure improvements as they relocate to New Mexico or look to expand here.

Sceye was founded in 2014 and Vestergaard has made a name for himself with global humanitarian efforts. He has structured Sceye around the model of humanitarian entrepreneurship in line with United National Sustainable Development Goals.

Vestergaard, the Swiss-based health company, developed the Insecticidal Mosquito Net that helped reduce the global malaria burden by half. The drinking-water filter LifeStraw

has led to the near eradication of the Guinea worm in developing countries. LifeStraw was Time Magazine's "Invention of the Year" and named by Forbes as "One of Ten Things that Will Change the Way We Live"

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SSV Launch (Oct. 2019) - Sceye Spaceship. Photo courtesy of Sceye.

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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