



EDD

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DEPARTMENT

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EDD Awards Grant to Town of Taos *Airport Industrial Park Improvements Will Boost Job Growth*

SANTA FE, N.M. – The New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) has awarded its third rural LEDA infrastructure grant to the Town of Taos for airport industrial park investments that will help attract new businesses and better serve passengers, Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced today.

The awards from the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) come under recent authority given to EDD that allows assistance to rural communities for important infrastructure improvements that can boost jobs and expand economic capacity.

The agreement is pending local government approval, and would provide up to \$1.7 million from EDD for a water distribution extension to the Taos Regional Airport.

Secretary Keyes said the state's new 20-year Statewide Strategic Plan specifically address inequities between urban and rural areas - gaps that have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Rural communities have fewer project-ready locations and this puts them at a disadvantage when competing for business development projects," Keyes said. "This inequity is what led Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham to expand LEDA and focus on rural infrastructure to level the playing field for smaller communities. This will remain a key goal for our department."

The Moriarty Municipal Airport received a \$283,000 grant in 2020 and was the first to benefit from the new initiative to better assist communities with improvements to publicly owned industrial properties and attract business development. Last month, the City of Clovis was awarded a \$2.13 million LEDA grant to extend a municipal waterline to serve its airport, which serve residents as well as Airmen and families at Cannon Air Force Base.

For Taos, the new infrastructure will allow for light manufacturing and distribution businesses to grow, accommodate aviation-related services, and allow the community to expand its foothold in alternative energy, film, and technology services.

The airport improvements will also allow for better emergency response with a greater capacity to transport and treat severely ill patients and stage emergency medical personnel if needed, which has been a concern during recent COVID-19 surge.

"Funding to support smaller airports provides strategic economic assistance to the region," New Mexico State Sen. Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales said. "Economic Development is an avenue to create jobs and support community businesses. The LEDA funding to the Taos airport from the state is an example of building a stronger and more sustainable economy for the Taos region and all of New Mexico."

“This award is an important step in helping our region diversify and strengthen our economy with new good-paying career jobs and new clean industries that we could not compete for until now,” Taos Mayor Daniel R. Barone said. “The town has already received proposals for over 440,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 510 new positions over the next three years as part of this project. Our thanks to Cabinet Secretary Keyes, her staff, and the governor for their hard work and continued support of our community, the state, and our shared vision of better jobs for all citizens.”

The Taos Airport project includes a 6.5-mile water transmission line extension as well as a pump station and several easements. The project is a collaboration among local, state, and federal entities. The town received a \$2 million CARES Act grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for utility improvements on airport grounds.

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Taos Regional Airport

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.

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