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The Rural Efficient Business Program Aids Businesses in Becoming More Energy Efficient

EDD enters second year of REBP online interview series

SANTA FE, N.M. – The Rural Efficient Business Program (REBP) is continuing to offer its business interview series in 2022 with the hopes of affecting positive change throughout the state, Economic Development Department (EDD) Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced.



REBP, an EDD initiative, connects New Mexico rural businesses and agricultural producers with assistance around energy efficiency and renewable energy systems. REBP is funded by a grant from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is provided through a partnership with the [New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) (NM MEP) and New Mexico State University (NMSU).

Since May 2021, the REBP has been providing monthly interviews, each featuring a rural New Mexico business. These businesses join with EDD and participants in a discussion about best practices and challenges around energy efficiency and renewable energy systems. The purpose of the program is to share learning opportunities and promote awareness of resources for rural businesses and agricultural producers.

“It’s important that businesses know all of the resources – technical, financial, and other incentives – that are available to them in New Mexico,” Secretary Keyes said. “These programs are free and can save you a lot of money. Helping the planet is a well-appreciated side effect and businesses should be rewarded for making pro-planet decisions.”

The interview series is moderated by Felicia DePaula who serves as EDD's Program Development Specialist. In 2021, ten interviews were conducted and over 350 businesses attended. Business owners and staff said that their main impetus for joining the discussion was to learn about energy assessments, financing for operations, and energy efficient retrofits.

Most of the participants represented the manufacturing, hospitality, agriculture, and services industry sectors. Prior interviews included businesses located in Hobbs, Taos, El Rito, McIntosh, Truth or Consequences, Santa Fe, Ruidoso, Agua Fria Village, and Aztec, New Mexico.



View the REBP 2021 Series Recap video.

In addition to the interviews, REBP offers opportunities for rural businesses and agricultural producers to sign up for a free energy assessment, receive technical assistance, and be connected with financial resources for renewable energy systems or retrofiting. Ten businesses have chosen to receive the free energy assessments to date.

The 2022 interview series started off strong on Jan. 26 with Brownrice Internet. Brownrice is a state-of-the-art, solar-powered, air-cooled data center located in Taos. EDD interviewed President Oban Lambie, who applied for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) through USDA that helped fund their solar parking structure. Lambie walked participants through the process of applying for the grant and the options for utilizing the funding.

During the interview, Lambie referred to the program as a "money maker." "My data center's USDA REAP grant application was nothing short of amazing," Lambie said. "The process is extremely easy and fast, and the grant funds changed our planned solar project from 'maybe this will work' to 'this is definitely going to work!' New Mexico businesses have got to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to get seriously green."

The next interview will take place on February 17 at 10 am with Sergio Favela from La Primera Tortilla Factory in Sunland Park, New Mexico. Favela will walk viewers through the company's efforts to make the facility more energy efficient, including adding solar paneling and LED Lighting. La Primera will also discuss their future plans to reduce energy and costs at their manufacturing site.

You can view all of our previously recorded webinars and also learn more about the program, on the Rural Efficient Business Program website at nmruralbiz.com.

If you would like more information about REBP, please contact Felicia DePaula, EDD program development specialist, at feliciaf.depaula@state.nm.us.

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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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