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Universal Hydrogen picks New Mexico for major manufacturing hub

Company will hire hundreds in Albuquerque to decarbonize aviation, other heavy transportation sectors

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – A company with a mission to enable carbon-free fuel and reduce the climate impact of air travel will build a manufacturing and distribution center in New Mexico with a goal of hiring hundreds of employees in Albuquerque, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and the company announced today.

[Universal Hydrogen](#) has chosen a 50-acre parcel of property northeast of the passenger terminal at the Albuquerque International Sunport to manufacture and distribute its hydrogen storage modules, assemble airplane retrofit kits, perform aftermarket maintenance services, and manage administrative activities. The location includes access to a runway and the potential future reclamation of a rail spur south of the Sunport.

New Mexico will be at the heart of the company's mission to decarbonize hard-to-abate greenhouse gas emissions in aviation, ground transportation, and heavy industry to help the United States meet the Paris Agreement goals. The company also has facilities in California, Washington State, and Toulouse, France.

"This project puts New Mexico and Universal Hydrogen at the center of the global effort to decarbonize transportation and aviation in particular," Gov. Lujan Grisham said. "Hydrogen, solar, wind, and alternative energy are job-rich industries and New Mexico's partnerships with these companies are part of a forward-thinking model to create a robust and diversified economy, while being a part of the solution when it comes to a changing climate."

"Aviation is going to be one of the most difficult sectors of our economy to decarbonize. The clean hydrogen capsules that Universal Hydrogen plans to manufacture in Albuquerque will be central to reducing carbon pollution in air transportation — a major contributor to our climate crisis. I'm proud to welcome all of the jobs and investment that Universal Hydrogen is bringing to New Mexico," U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich said.

Universal Hydrogen will spend one to two years on the planning and construction of its New Mexico facilities, with a goal of commencing full-scale manufacturing by 2024. It anticipates investing over \$254 million into New Mexico and aims to hire 500 employees over the next seven years. These jobs will include highly skilled engineers and composite

technicians with attractive salaries and benefits.

The State of New Mexico is pledging \$10 million from the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) job-creation fund. The City of Albuquerque will serve as the fiscal agent and is considering providing additional funding from its local economic development fund.

The construction project alone is expected to generate over 1,200 jobs, and the manufacturing and distribution center is expected to have an economic impact of over \$700 million over the next 10 years.

“With two federal Department of Energy research labs and a skilled workforce, the future for new, innovative energy technology is here in New Mexico,” Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said. “Gov. Lujan Grisham gets it and she thinks big — New Mexico is now competing for sophisticated companies with highly paid jobs, and winning.”

“Our bold commitment to taking meaningful climate action is attracting companies that share our values,” Environment Department Cabinet Secretary James Kenney said. “Even more important is that Universal Hydrogen will hire New Mexicans to broadly decarbonize the aviation industry from right here in New Mexico.”

The economic assistance is pending support from the Albuquerque City Council and will be paid out as Universal Hydrogen reaches economic development benchmarks as agreed to in a pending Project Participation Agreement. Universal Hydrogen is also pursuing federal programs to help scale its manufacturing and production capabilities.

“Universal Hydrogen’s decision to build here at the Aviation Center of Excellence is a good opportunity for the Sunport,” Richard McCurley, director of aviation for the City of Albuquerque, said. “This is prime real estate for all types of aviation-adjacent businesses, and we look forward to building a partnership.”

Universal Hydrogen has signed a letter of intent with the City of Albuquerque for 50 of the 80 acres once occupied by a north/south runway that was decommissioned in 2012. Over the past several years, the Aviation Department’s Business Development Division has been marketing the shovel-ready site to aviation, aerospace, and R&D companies.

Universal Hydrogen is uniquely positioned to address the hydrogen value chain for aviation, both for hydrogen fuel distribution and hydrogen-powered airplanes. The company utilizes proprietary capsules that safely store hydrogen during transit and serve as modular tanks that are loaded directly onto aircraft. The technology will underpin a logistics network that can move hydrogen from production facilities to airports over existing freight infrastructure, eliminating the need for costly new pipelines, tankers, and hydrogen storage facilities.

The company is also developing powertrain conversion kits to retrofit existing regional turboprop aircraft, including the Dash 8-300 and ATR 72, to enable these aircraft to fly on hydrogen. It thus far has agreements with 11 air carriers to retrofit nearly 100 regional airplanes with a goal of being FAA-certified and in commercial service by 2025.

After demonstrating success with regional aircraft, Universal Hydrogen plans to apply its modular fueling solution to larger commercial airplanes as well as drones, industrial equipment, and ground transportation, all domains with high-carbon footprints that will require hydrogen to meet pollution-reduction goals.

“Hydrogen is the best and only scalable solution to truly decarbonize aviation, and we want to bring it to market decades sooner than anyone thought possible — by 2025,” Jon Gordon, co-founder and general counsel for Universal Hydrogen, said. Gordon said the company chose Albuquerque for manufacturing and distribution because of its strategic location that allows the company to leverage air, rail, and the interstate highway system as well as robust partnerships in governments, industry, and research institutions.

“I can’t imagine a better place to be. We need a highly skilled workforce, and we need it immediately,” Gordon said. “We see New Mexico as a place that will give our employees an

affordable, high quality of life with access to culture and the outdoors. It's really a dream location."

He added that both Sen. Heinrich and Gov. Lujan Grisham are rare among elected officials in fully appreciating the transformative economic effect of sustainable hydrogen, including its ability to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

"New Mexico has some of the most forward-looking political figures in the country right now as far as seeing the potential of hydrogen to transform our economy and eliminate our reliance on fossil fuels," Gordon added. "New Mexico's leadership will attract other companies to the region as well. That's important to us. We want to be a significant catalyst to build this sustainability-focused ecosystem in New Mexico."

The Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance, the area's non-profit, private-sector economic development organization, provided technical assistance for Universal Hydrogen's expansion.

"New Mexico has long been a hub for new innovation and the work being done at Universal Hydrogen will continue to put us on the map as a leading location for advanced technologies," Danielle Casey, president and CEO of Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance, said. "The applications for scalability are only limited by the imagination and what better place to do this work than in New Mexico. We were honored to again work in tandem with state and local partners to make it possible to welcome Universal Hydrogen to the region."

Universal Hydrogen has been featured in *Bloomberg*, *Reuters*, *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Financial Times*, among many others, as one of the innovative startups working to decarbonize the transportation sector.

For Universal Hydrogen related media inquiries, please contact Kate Gundry at uh2@pluckpr.com.

New Mexico has taken a bold approach towards clean hydrogen development. In January, the state [signed an MOU with Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories](#) that leverages their respective areas of expertise with hydrogen to deliver timely and efficient transformation of energy systems. In February, Gov. Lujan Grisham [signed an MOU with the governors of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming](#) in announcing that they will compete jointly for a portion of the \$8 billion allocated in the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the development of regional clean hydrogen hubs.

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Universal Hydrogen engineers stand before a testbed version of their megawatt-class, zero-emission hydrogen powertrain, the final version of which will be kitted at their new Albuquerque facility.



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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