

Five Northern New Mexico businesses awarded funds to spur economic growth

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LOS ALAMOS, N.M., May 19, 2016—Five Northern New Mexico businesses have been named winners of this year’s Venture Acceleration Fund (VAF) awards. Funded primarily by Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS) and administered by the Regional Development Corporation (RDC), these awards are a collaborative investment with a shared goal of adding jobs and revenue to northern New Mexico.

“The economic success of the region depends in large part on the strength of its small businesses,” said David Pesiri, director of the Richard P. Feynman Center for Innovation at Los Alamos National Laboratory, which is responsible for the Lab’s technology transfer initiatives. “The VAF plays a critical role in helping innovative companies grow and contribute to the broader economy.”

The 2016 awardees are EcoPesticides, Mora Valley Woodworking of Mora, Southwest PPE Services, Taos Mesa Brewing, and Tibbar Plasma Technologies.

“LANS has supported the VAF for 10 years now because of its commitment to the community and its strong belief that supporting local businesses creates new jobs for the region and improves the lives of New Mexicans,” stated Kathy Keith, Los Alamos’ director of Community Relations and Partnerships.

“The projects that the VAF will invest in this year range from agricultural manufacturing to high-tech prototypes. I think that speaks to the distinct talent found in Northern New Mexico,” said Liddie Martinez, executive director of the RDC. “We were impressed by the quality of proposals we received this year, and are pleased to be able to provide important seed capital these five companies poised for growth.”

This year’s awardees represent a diverse array of industries based in five of the seven counties that were invited to apply—Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Sandoval, Rio Arriba, Taos, San Miguel and Mora. The selected companies for 2016 are:

- EcoPesticides, Santa Fe: manufacturer of biologically based and environmentally friendly forms of pest control.
- Mora Valley Woodworking, Mora: manufacturer of funerary (cremation) urns that utilize Northern New Mexico materials and are environmentally friendly.
- Southwest PPE Services, Española: established commercial cleaning service transitioning to Personal Protective Ensembles (PPE) specialist, servicing fire fighters and first responders throughout the region.
- Taos Mesa Brewing, Taos: established microbrewery collaborating with Taoseño farmers and agricultural organizations to develop local barley for use in brewing, establish a regional craft malting facility and distribute the final beer product through a dedicated production plant.
- Tibbar Plasma Technologies, Los Alamos: developer of prototype device that will support new technology for high-voltage, direct-current (HVDC) transmission.

The VAF was established in 2006 by LANS, the company that manages Los Alamos National Laboratory, to stimulate the economy by supporting growth-oriented companies. Since then, the VAF program has assisted 57 New Mexico companies through marketing and technology development activities such as proof-of-concept, prototyping, developing market share, product launching or leveraging funding. In addition to LANS, other 2016 funders include the City of Santa Fe, Los Alamos County, New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Santa Fe County, and Century Bank.

The VAF award is structured as a zero-interest loan, with repayment required only if a company is acquired, achieves certain revenue goals or leaves New Mexico within a certain timeframe. The RDC administers the awards. Originally created to commercialize technologies developed at Los Alamos National Laboratory, the VAF has diversified from exclusively funding technology companies to include businesses that manufacture and sell products outside New Mexico. Those companies not selected for a VAF award are often connected with other resources that can help them meet their goals.

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