Los Alamos National Laboratory signs lease on Santa Fe office

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Connections between Los Alamos National Laboratory and the City of Santa Fe will be strengthened with the Laboratory's opening of a new downtown office space housing up to 75 employees and including the Dorothy McKibbin Conference Center.

The Laboratory signed a 10-year lease on a 28,000-square-foot building at the junction of N. Guadalupe and W. Alameda. The new location offers space for Laboratory meetings, events, conferences, and teleworking.

"Santa Fe has played an important role in the history of the Laboratory since our inception, and we're delighted to have a presence in the City Different again," said Thom Mason, Laboratory director. "This building will act as an additional entrance point for the Laboratory, just as Dorothy McKibbin's office at 109 East Palace in Santa Fe did decades ago. I extend my gratitude to the National Nuclear Security Administration for partnering with the Laboratory to make this project happen." The NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy that oversees the Laboratory.

In 1943, longtime Santa Fe resident Dorothy McKibbin (1897–1985) was an unemployed single mother when she was offered a secretarial position for an organization known only as "Project Y." At $150/month, it was the best pay in town, so she took it. For the next 20 years, McKibbin staffed the now-famed office at 109 East Palace, the headquarters of the secret Manhattan Project. She became known as the Gatekeeper of Los Alamos and a liaison between the two communities. McKibbin is remembered for her optimistic outlook, skill at putting people at ease, and dedication to helping new hires and visiting collaborators get acquainted with the historic culture of Northern New Mexico.

"Even today, a great deal of the groundbreaking work we do at the Laboratory involves collaboration with partners from across the region and around the world—whether it's on a global scientific challenge such as our COVID-19 research, or a local education program like the Regional Partnership School in Pojoaque," said Kelly Beierschmitt, deputy director of operations. "A Santa Fe location makes the Laboratory more accessible to our partners and neighbors."

The Santa Fe office includes the first-floor Dorothy McKibbin Conference Center plus permanent offices and co-working spaces for the Laboratory's Community Partnerships Office, as well as some communications and government affairs functions. No hazardous work will be carried out there. The up-to-75 employees to be headquartered

at the new office space are residents of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Bernalillo, Los Alamos, and Sandoval Counties.

At present, roughly 2,900 of the Laboratory's 12,000 employees reside in the city and county of Santa Fe. Their salaries, much of which are spent where they reside, exceed $300 million annually. In FY 2020, the Laboratory hired more than 1,000 new employees; of those, 70 percent were New Mexico residents. The Laboratory expects to hire more than 1,000 more new employees in 2021.

"Los Alamos National Laboratory is among the largest employers in Northern New Mexico and has a huge impact on the local economy," said Bridget Dixson, president and CEO of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce. "The Chamber is pleased to welcome the Santa Fe office and the Laboratory employees that will become part of our business community."

The Santa Fe location will be a hub for community and economic development activities. It will facilitate the Laboratory's educational partnerships, workforce development initiatives, recruiting, and technology transfer. It will also give the Laboratory's technology transfer division—the Feynman Center—access to additional meeting space in Santa Fe to foster new technology collaborations from both local and national sources.

> Learn more about the Laboratory's economic development work

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