

## **A Year in Review: Albuquerque on the Rise**

By Gary Tonjes

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This time last year, we began encouraging our organization's members to invite family members and friends living outside of the state to learn about the new, quality jobs being created in the Albuquerque metro area. These opportunities are making it possible for New Mexicans to move home while giving them access to great career pathways.

Now, 12 months later, Albuquerque is enjoying momentum it hasn't seen in years. Site selection consultants and those making location decisions for companies are expressing a renewed interest in the metro area as a result of several projects announced this year. And members of our staff at Albuquerque Economic Development, Inc. (AED) are increasingly being contacted by professionals interested in personally relocating to the metro area, principally citing the new career opportunities and housing affordability.

This progress is validation that New Mexico's investment climate, well-financed job creation programs and economic development efforts delivered in a big way for the metro area in 2018. Here's an impressive, though incomplete, look at recent employer announcements and what to anticipate in the year ahead:

- Netflix will spend \$1 billion over the next decade, hiring approximately 1,000 people annually for film and television productions in the company's first corporately-owned studio.
- Intel is actively hiring engineers in all disciplines for its Rio Rancho campus, this time to support its revolutionary 3D XPoint memory technology.
- Facebook formally announced last January that it will move forward on the 3 million-square-foot campus it envisioned in Los Lunas, which means up to 1,000 contractors on site daily for the next five years or so. More than 170 local companies are subcontractors on the project.
- Local startup 3D Glass Solutions said in September that it will invest \$23 million and hire 139 new employees, about a third of them engineers.
- Albany Molecular Research, Inc. (AMRI) is investing \$30 million to expand its contract pharmaceutical manufacturing capabilities in Albuquerque.
- Technology firm 2NDGEAR relocated from Los Angeles and will create 100 new jobs at its new home in western Albuquerque.
- Vitality Works, which manufactures an array of quality nutraceutical products for a wide variety of retailers including Whole Foods and Amazon, is expanding its plant on Albuquerque's west side.
- NNSA broke ground on a \$175 million, 330,000-square-foot complex on South Eubank.
- SolAero Technologies, Raytheon, and Applied Technology Associates, along with other Sandia Science & Technology Park tenants, are collectively hiring about 200 employees.
- Fidelity Investments, which employs approximately 1,000 people in Albuquerque, is adding nearly 50 technical help desk positions.

- Wagner Equipment broke ground on a \$100 million plant at Rio Bravo and I-25.
- Ben E. Keith will invest \$80 million and create 93 jobs at its new facility.
- AMFAB Steel is expanding with 80 new jobs in Bernalillo.
- Keter Plastic opened a new manufacturing plant south of Belen, where the company has already created more than 120 jobs.

Of additional importance this year is the news that more than 1,100 new jobs are being created in downtown Albuquerque alone:

- TaskUs is bringing nearly 700 new jobs to First Plaza.
- Carenet Healthcare Services is on a pathway to hire 233 employees for its new office at 4th and Roma.
- Data visualization startup RS21 is interviewing to fill 80 new jobs for developers, designers, data scientists and project managers in the Occidental building.
- Rural Sourcing, Inc. is adding 50 new software developers.
- Xpansiv is hiring top tech talent for its new office in Albuquerque's Glorieta Tech Center.
- LAVU relocated 50 jobs to Albuquerque Plaza.

TempurSealy, Flagship Foods, Advanced Network Management, Indica Labs, TriLumina, Affordable Solar, Kevothermal and RiskSense are also hiring, having made important expansion announcements during 2018.

These decisions are a reflection of the confidence these employers have in the Albuquerque metro area, which provides them access to skilled talent, excellent workforce development programs and incentives, and elected officials vested in the community's success by creating a business environment attractive for investment by new and expanding employers.

AED led or was a key partner in many, but certainly not all, of the projects that are generating these career opportunities. We thank our partners from federal, state and local governments, along with UNM, CNM, metro-area economic development organizations, real estate brokers and others in the private sector for their work to support those employers making these important new investments and hiring decisions.

Our collective success in 2018 has helped position the Albuquerque metro area for a strong year ahead. At AED, we're currently working with more than a dozen local companies on potential expansions representing the possibility of more than 1,000 new jobs. And, on the recruitment front, our top 10 prospects considering the metro area collectively represent the possibility of more than 1,200 new jobs. This means that the current pipeline could lead to the creation of more than 2,200 new jobs for Albuquerque-area residents.

We're pleased with the considerable momentum building in the community and how it's advancing our economy. In 2019, we encourage you to invite your family members and friends currently living outside of the state to take another look at the career opportunities in Albuquerque, and to join our growing talent pool.

