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## AREA SPOTLIGHTS

# New Mexico

by Alexis Elmore



*Photo courtesy of Visit Albuquerque/ MarbleStreetStudio*

## Land of Enchantment... & Sustainability

Before news of the company's planned solar cell manufacturing facility was announced, solar manufacturers Maxeon Solar Technologies and Array Technologies had just moved into the groundbreaking phases of their own projects.

"These projects show that New Mexico and greater Albuquerque have a competitive edge for large-scale investment projects, and that we have significant alignment among our public and private partners to get things done," says Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA) President and CEO Danielle Casey.

## Welcome to Your EV Ecosystem in Northwest Ohio



Maxeon landed in Mesa del Sol with \$1 billion in hand to begin construction on a 1.9-million-sq.-ft. solar cell and panel manufacturing facility, which will be the state's first large-scale photovoltaic cell and manufacturing plant. Albuquerque-based Array Technologies announced the groundbreaking of its new \$50 million, 216,000-sq.-ft. utility-scale solar tracking technology manufacturing plant in April 2024, cementing commitment to its home base.

"Array Technologies is a tremendous example of the importance of a strong local business retention and expansion effort," says Casey. "To retain it in New Mexico and accommodate its growth needs required the partnership of the

She notes that supporting the homegrown business was an essential priority, as the city contributed Local Economic Development Act funding toward Array's project despite the company choosing to locate slightly outside city limits in Bernalillo County.

"This was thanks to the city's knowledge that economies are regional, and that Array is a significant employer of Albuquerque residents," Casey says.

Delaware-based Ebon Solar announced plans for a new \$942 million project in August 2024. The investment will support the construction of an 834,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing plant in the Mesa del Sol industrial development area. The facility is catered to developing beginning-to-end advanced manufacturing of solar cells, creating 900 new jobs upon completion.

"The Ebon project first came to AREA courtesy of the New Mexico Partnership due to the site consultants' national search efforts," says Casey. "The AREA team is proud to have committed significant time on facilitation and support of this announcement, from the initial inquiry research and regional proposal response to facilitation of a highly in-depth, multi-day initial site tour and two additional facilitated visits with constant communication throughout."

At the time of the project's announcement Ebon Solar CEO Judy Cai noted Albuquerque aligned with the company's commitment to sustainable innovation. The region's solar resources, favorable renewable energy policies and skilled workforce will work to enhance Ebon's production capabilities moving forward, according to Cai.

"It is direct evidence of the exceptional work by all partners in New Mexico aligned to support economic development: the many economic development partners, other key state agencies, local governments, our utilities, educational systems, and of course the property owner who worked tirelessly to quickly pivot development and infrastructure plans to accommodate the project," says Casey.

## Got Helium?

Months after Desert Mountain Energy (DME) Corp. identified software

in New Mexico, production at its helium processing facility is on the rise.

Maintenance at the site involved software rewrites and upgrades to wiring, switchgear and bottlenecks in the system. In 2023, DME decided to move its Arizona helium processing site just outside of Roswell, New Mexico, to take advantage of the state’s natural gas reserves. Today the company is preparing to move its first truckload of helium from the plant, according to DME’s January 2025 announcement.

The West Pecos Gas Field is well positioned to extract helium from natural gas, as the area’s robust infrastructure features 188 wells, more than 50 miles of gas collection lines and 77,000 acres of oil and gas leases. Although it is unknown when DME plans to expand its site, the firm has stated that up to 100 additional wells could be introduced. Aside from the state’s built-in natural gas deposits that make it a key location for the industry, the site offers the company ample room to grow and a supplier ecosystem needed to streamline operations.

BY THE NUMBERS



31<sup>st</sup>

Business Tax Climate Rank Change 2024–2025: -8



34<sup>th</sup>

Higher Ed. R&D Expenditure in \$000s: \$552,260



35<sup>th</sup>

Number of NCRCs: 39,243 | Percent Improved 2023–24: 1.21%



27<sup>th</sup>

2021 Workers' Comp Index Rate: 1.27



1<sup>st</sup>

Industrial power cost per kWh: 5.75 ¢



10<sup>th</sup>

Total Rev. as Share of Total Expenses, FY 2008-22: 106.8%

Selected Top Projects by Capital Investment

COMPANY	CITY	INVESTMENT \$M
NETFLIX	Albuquerque	2,000
Ebon Solar	Albuquerque	942
Kairos Power	Albuquerque	269
Solaero Technologies Corp.	Albuquerque	70
Virgin Galactic	Truth or Consequences	30

Source: Conway Projects Database

As part of the company's project update, DME disclosed that it had been in the midst of a pilot program that would assess the feasibility of operating small modular cryptocurrency mining equipment and small data centers. The results were promising as the site holds great potential for hosting data centers. Introducing news of a partnership on a 250-megawatt net-zero energy data center between an undisclosed local gas producer and a major data center operator, DME says work has begun toward streamlining its collection system to facilitate an increase in helium capacity and the transportation of processed gas to a mainline for data center operations.

"The company has developed and finalized plans for near, interim and long-term strategies to achieve the goal of maximizing natural gas and helium production from the existing wells in the field within the next 24-36 months," the firm's release noted. "Over 60% of our leases in New Mexico are situated on Federal BLM properties, and the transition in the administration in Washington, D.C., is expected to bring further favorable impacts to our operations in both New Mexico and Arizona."



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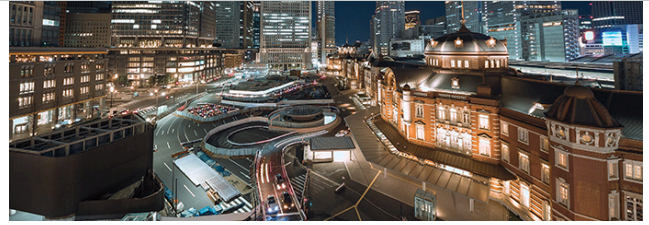
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