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Manufacturing startup picks Las Cruces for production center

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Big Tuna USA is making Las Cruces its new pipe manufacturing center.

New Mexico Department of Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced Tuesday that the startup signed a lease on a 15,000-square-foot space at 1846 W. Amador Road and will hire 30 employees over the next three years, paying an average of \$15.70 an hour. Big Tuna holds the exclusive rights to manufacture and distribute a high-density pipe product patented by Australia-based Long Pipes Ltd, according to a release. Big Tuna is targeting the oil and gas industry for process water management systems.

"We looked at Colorado, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico and we're pretty excited about this location in Las Cruces," said Mike Watters, director of operations for Big Tuna, in a statement. "We're starting a business from the ground up and the incentives really make this feasible."

The New Mexico Economic Development Department will invest up to \$200,000 in Local Economic Development Act funding while the city of Las Cruces has pledged \$75,000 in LEDA funding for the project and will be the fiscal agent for the LEDA award. The company will invest \$7.5 million in private money to get the project off the ground.

"I'm absolutely thrilled by our continued economic expansion across key growth areas," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said in a statement. "Every new partner, each new investment, all the new jobs — all of it boosts the signal we're sending to industry here and elsewhere that New Mexico is open for business and ready for significant growth."

Big Tuna is expected to spend four months redeveloping the site as it plans to produce 50 miles of pipe by the end of the year.

“We have the workforce, we have the business climate, we have the incentives and companies are taking notice,” Keyes said in a statement.

Big Tuna was recruited to the area by the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, which also helped bring in [Rich Global Hemp](#) and [420 Valley LLC](#) — two new-to-market hemp companies — to Las Cruces in 2019.

“We are excited about this opportunity to welcome yet another international manufacturing operation to Las Cruces,” Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima said in a statement. “Through the efforts of MVEDA and our economic development team we continue the momentum of industry diversification and new job opportunities for our residents.”



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