

Gov. Lujan Grisham announces film production company to headquarter in Las Cruces

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\$3 million state LEDA investment to 828 Productions set to anchor innovative media business in New Mexico

LAS CRUCES – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced on Wednesday that a full-service film and production company has chosen Las Cruces for its headquarters, with plans in motion to open a film production studio in the near future.

Over the next six years, California-based 828 Productions plans to invest \$75 million to build a 300,000-square-foot studio and 20-acre back lot, creating at least 100 high-paying jobs in Las Cruces. The firm began ramping up its production efforts in May 2022, filling key positions and purchasing a 7,500-square foot office building in downtown Las Cruces for training, post-production, and visual effects work.

The state of New Mexico will pledge \$3 million to the project from the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) job creation fund as the company meets its job target of at least 100 full-time year-round employees.

“New Mexico is seeing a record number of productions from the film and television industry and all-time high spending, and it’s no accident,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “Not only are we investing in studios like 828 Productions, we are expanding industry workforce training with a new film school in Albuquerque and Las Cruces – and it is paying off. We’re extremely excited to welcome 828 Productions to Las Cruces, as well as the high-paying, local jobs and industry growth it will bring to the entire state.”

828 has finalized negotiations on an additional 35 acres of land in downtown Las Cruces, with existing structures that will provide soundstage and set construction space. The film company intends to shoot its first production in the new Las Cruces Studio before the end of 2022 and spend \$350 million on productions over the next decade.

The City of Las Cruces is considering an additional \$897,000 in Local LEDA through capital appropriations, with an additional amount up to \$2.8 million set aside by Las Cruces City Council specifically for cinematic infrastructure. These funds are pending City Council approval and finalization of a Project Participation Agreement.

With the LEDA agreement and other guarantees from the company to invest in workforce training, 828 Productions is set to become New Mexico’s third film partner, joining Netflix and NBCUniversal. The partnership model is a key provision of 2019’s Senate Bill 2, spearheaded by Gov. Lujan Grisham, which revised the New Mexico film tax credits to catalyze permanent investments from the film and television industry in New Mexico to create jobs and diversify the economy.

“828 Studios chose Las Cruces because of Gov. Lujan Grisham’s commitment to film and television job growth,” said Economic Development Department **Secretary Alicia J. Keyes**. “This is an industry that is highly mobile and can locate anywhere. They are coming to Las Cruces to create jobs here because we have put in place forward-thinking investments that is helping this industry thrive.”

828 Productions is a full-service film finance and production company, whose recent films include: K. Asher Levin’s dark millennial comedy “Helen’s Dead,” Robert Rippberger’s haunted house thriller “Those Who Walk Away,” Deauville Film Festival Grand Special Prize Nominee “The Last

Son,” Camille Delmarre’s high-octane action film “Assassin Club,” “The Price We Pay,” “Raven’s Hollow,” “Operation Seawolf,” “The Requin,” and SXSW Grand Jury Prize winner “The Fallout.”

“We were looking for a home for 828 Studios and fell in love with Las Cruces,” **Todd Lundbohm**, Founder and CEO of 828 Productions, said. “This is a town on the rise, with a wealth of opportunity just waiting to be tapped into. At 828, we’re passionate about story and film as an art form, but we’re equally passionate about creating a studio environment that inspires positivity behind the scenes as well,” he continued. “For us, it’s about putting down roots, and New Mexico, specifically Las Cruces, gives us the ideal place to do that.”

Stephanie Denton is a long-time media executive formerly with WWE Studios and Lionsgate International and now EVP of Sales and Business Development with 828 Productions. “We’re excited to work with this amazing community to continue growing the local workforce, developing programs with NMSU and Doña Ana Community College with the goal of creating a top-tier hub for production, right here in Las Cruces,” Denton said.

Denton added that the governor’s commitment through EDD and the Higher Education Department to develop a professional media education training program through the Next Generation Media Academy will allow 828 Studios to develop hands-on internships and training programs that can lead to full-time employment for many students.

The creation of 828 Studios comes as Las Cruces is seeing a surge of filming activity, hosting Netflix and major studio and independent productions featuring well-known actors including Clint Eastwood, Mel Gibson, Bruce Willis, Kate Bosworth, Ving Rhames, and Ryan Phillippe.

Las Cruces is included in New Mexico’s “uplift” film incentive area, providing film productions an extra 5% film rebate for filming there, for a total potential incentive of 35%. The incentive resulted in a 650% increase in direct spending in rural areas of the state last year.

“Today’s announcement is a game changer and a dream come true for the film industry in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County,” said State Senator and Film Las Cruces Co-Founder and President **Jeff Steinborn**. “We’re thrilled to have 828 Productions making this investment in our community to create a full-service film production studio and backlot. 828 Studios will help elevate Las Cruces as one of the top film production hotspots in New Mexico and the United States, and showcase our excellent film incentives, diverse locations, talented crew, and rich southwestern culture.”

Pending city council approval, the City of Las Cruces would be the fiscal agent for the economic assistance.

“Las Cruces is already a destination for filmmakers and the City of Las Cruces is working closely with 828 Productions to bring a world-class production company to the city so we can create permanent year-round jobs and build our highly skilled workforce in the film industry,” **Mayor Ken Miyagishima** said.