

STORIES FROM THE INTEGRATION INITIATIVE



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THE CHICKEN & EGG

Mission: Graduate and the Albuquerque Workforce

Here is one of those ‘chicken or the egg’ moments: what comes first, a skilled workforce or jobs to employ that workforce? This burning question is at the core of a strong partnership that has developed between Mission: Graduate and the Albuquerque Integration Initiative.

Mission: Graduate is a cradle-to-career education partnership that boldly aspires to add 60,000 new college degrees and certificates to Central New Mexico by 2020. Through their career exploration opportunities and workforce alignment with employers, Mission: Graduate aims to keep graduates in our state and make sure that they have the skills they need to succeed in the local workforce.

“What we found over the work so far,” said Executive Director Angelo Gonzales, “is that students who have parents who work at Intel, for example, or have well connected teachers know the pathways in. But students who don’t have these adults in their lives may not know about these opportunities.” Mission: Graduate is bridging that gap.

Over the past year they have been data wrangling in partnership with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. Together, they’ve developed a statewide jobs data system for student-specific opportunities. “We now know there are 39 employers involved and over 31,000 career exploration opportunities for students.” Angelo said, “There is potential for much more.”

Mission: Graduate is not in the business of influencing job creation directly. But, Angelo commented, “We have the ability to influence job preparation. So by working together with Living Cities, we can ensure we are both successful with the objectives we set.” And fortunately for Albuquerque, as Living Cities President Ben Hecht commented on local Albuquerque show, the Morning Brew, “Living Cities is investing in both the chicken and the egg.”

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• COMMONALITIES:

Focus on a developing strong partnerships, leveraging existing resources and building a deeply engaged and highly productive workforce

• OPPORTUNITY:

Mission: Graduate is working to prepare the next generation of Albuquerque’s workforce. Get involved here: <http://missiongraduatenm.org/get-involved/>



BEST AT BOOTSTRAPPING

Albuquerque travels in critical mass to this year's SxSW

“Reflecting on what cities are doing across the country, when you see how Albuquerque treats entrepreneurs, it is different. In some cities its all private or all public, but we know that in Albuquerque everyone needs to be involved.” Eric Renz-Whitmore, Albuquerque’s all-around tech dude.

Albuquerque is unique, and oftentimes we come up with solutions that other folks don't think of. Take PlugSolar for example: they innovated SunPort, a smart grid solar delivery device that allows consumers to simply plug in and use solar, instantly. SunPort is a local tech startup that has garnered attention from the likes of Fast Company and Forbes. And that is only one of the many innovations emerging out of Albuquerque.

All this activity is creating buzz, not only on a local level, but across the country. The momentum around innovation in Albuquerque, in fact, took our city onto the international stage at this year's South by Southwest. Last week fifteen local startups, including our friends at PlugSolar, traveled in critical mass to Austin with economic development leaders, venture capital firms, the New Mexico film office, and City of Albuquerque officials. Together they brought Albuquerque's entrepreneurial scene to the attention of thousands.

Startup companies weren't the only ones to captivate SxSW attendees. In fact, the City of Albuquerque took to the stage, too, bringing Mayor Berry, Tynesia Boyea-Robinson from Living Cities, and Mayor Johnson of the City of Sacramento together on a panel entitled *Bootstrapping Your City's Innovation System*. The panel, moderated by Tech. Co's Co-Founder and COO Jen Consalvo, discussed how cities across the country have become labs for all kinds of innovation. Albuquerque, Sacramento, and Living Cities are each utilizing existing assets and embracing diversity to drive change. Tynesia Boyea-Robinson said, “The challenges [faced in many cities] are too big for any one organization to solve alone so a prerequisite for change is for people to both do different things and do things differently.” Much of that “doing differently” has to do with what Ty calls the 4 “Is”: impact, interdependence, intrinsic motivation and iteration. These tools, when mobilized by a coalition of the willing, are bringing communities and cities together to collectively transform lives, futures, and economies.

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative:

Albuquerque's SxSW cohort represented successful cross-sector partnerships that continue to be cultivated through Albuquerque's Integration Initiative.

• OPPORTUNITY:

SxSW provides an opportunity to establish partnerships, access support, and build awareness around Albuquerque's innovative approach to economic development.



CO-OP CAPITAL MEETS THE SHARKS

Nusenda Presents Success-Driven Case for Co-Op Capital

“Through the Integration Initiative we’ve learned that there are a number of barriers to access capital. Even with the existing alternative support systems and programs there are folks contributing to our economy who still can’t access funds to grow or sustain their businesses. That’s something we need to change.” Robin Brulé, Chief Executive Strategist, Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative.

Late last month, Robin Brulé of Albuquerque’s Living Cities Integration Initiative, Frank Mirabal, Director of Collective Impact at the Mayor’s Office, and Jennifer Riordan, AVP of Community Relations at Wells Fargo Bank presented to 50+ investors at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City’s Investment Connection event. The three Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative members pitched funders on Nusenda’s Co-op Capital model, which has been recognized internationally by the likes of BAI-Infosys Finacle as an alternative lending model that can make big contributions to job growth and economic mobility.



In true shark tank format, Investment Connection brought nine New Mexico nonprofits together to compete for funding with only ten minutes to pitch their program and another ten minutes of Q&A. Co-op Capital had to take a condensed form, which provided a true “what you need to know” brief about the lending model. For those who are unfamiliar with the gist of it, read on to keep abreast of the conversation.

Co-op Capital sprouted out of a partnership with La Montañita Co-op, New Mexico’s largest community-owned natural foods market. La Montañita approached Nusenda to find a solution to their farmers’ lack of access to capital. Many growers in La Montañita’s network didn’t meet traditional loan requirements (collateral/credit), and couldn’t access the funding they needed to increase production and grow their businesses. In response to the challenges faced by local growers, Nusenda and La Montañita piloted a multi-stage borrowing tool that flipped the traditional loan model on its head; Nusenda provided funds to La Montañita, which were collateralized and loaned to individuals directly by La Montañita. This structure—which has now been deployed by numerous partner organizations totaling over \$438,000 of investment in New Mexico—allows borrowers to apply for loans through a trusted organization rather than a financial institution, which in turn enables loans to be based on character, trust, and relationship rather than a credit report or collateral. Nusenda has collected five years of data so far, which demonstrate a default rate of less than 1% across the board. This model is one of Albuquerque’s many creative approaches to growing our economy in new ways.

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative:

Co-op Capital contributes to the job growth and economic mobility we seek through our Integration Initiative.

• OPPORTUNITY:

This pitch requested a \$280,000 grant to expand Co-Op Capital to incubators, accelerators, and skill-building organizations as new access points.



UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

CNM has big plans for the Entrepreneurial Mindset Program

“New Mexico was built upon entrepreneurship. It’s in our history. And the Entrepreneurial Mindset Program is dedicated to building upon and strengthening what we already are and what we have been.” Debbie Johnson, Director of Education, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Development, CNM.

The Entrepreneurial Mindset Program first landed in Albuquerque in 2015. Developed from the Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative’s (ELI) international curriculum, CNM harnessed the opportunity to build out a program based on the fundamental aspects of successful entrepreneurs. Shortly after the Program landed in Albuquerque, the City of Albuquerque became the first city in America to embrace entrepreneurial mindset training, capturing interest from the likes of Entrepreneur.com and South by Southwest. The Program is now expanding beyond City workers, business people, and CNM students to increase participation across communities in Albuquerque, and some of those communities may surprise you.

ELI founder, Gary Schoeniger, said on a recent visit, “Albuquerque is the first city to recognize the power of an entrepreneurial mindset as a way of thinking that can empower people at all levels of society ... to make a greater contribution to those they serve.” CNM is taking “all levels of society” to heart, as it builds out the Program to serve high school students, immigrant entrepreneurs, and low-income populations. For CNM, partnership is central to this growth - and to the sustainability of the Program. Debbie Johnson of CNM commented, “Access to all is at the core of our mission at CNM. These partnerships are about building the Program in a way that provides more vulnerable populations with access to the curriculum.”

Since 2015 the College has established partnerships with Albuquerque Public Schools, the Hispano Chamber of Commerce, and the Albuquerque Community Foundation to meet their mission. The APS partnership will offer the course for free, as dual credit to high school students. Through the Albuquerque Community Foundation CNM hopes to offer 1,000 Program scholarships. And the Hispano Chamber of Commerce has already begun to offer the Program completely in Spanish with adaptations to ensure the curriculum is not only linguistically appropriate, but also culturally relevant. Debbie was right when she said, “The great thing is the curriculum is portable. It is not geographic. It is a mindset. It moves.” Debbie doesn’t think small. She continued, “It is a global opportunity, and it unites cultures in great ways.” It will be exciting to see where it goes next.

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Integration Initiative:

Entrepreneurship and new business development, workforce readiness, focus on access

• OPPORTUNITY:

Training opportunities for all levels - from executives to high school students. Learn more at stemuluscenter.org/entrepreneurial-mindset-program/



OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Hispano Chamber graduates over 50 immigrant entrepreneurs

On October 20th, 2015 the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce held an event to honor 52 immigrant entrepreneurs who had completed their *Emprendedores* program, a Spanish language entrepreneurship training program that the Chamber introduced last fall.

The *Emprendedores* program—currently taught by CNM Stimulus Center professor Marvin Lozano—is offered in Spanish to immigrant business owners who seek to develop entrepreneurial skills. “We have seen great success in the program so far,” said Synthia Jaramillo, VP and Director of the Barelas Economic Opportunity Center. “Not only do students gain skills to grow and accelerate their business, they also build leadership skills and confidence.” This dual outcome of the program is creating strong business leaders and connecting immigrant business owners into resource networks to establish and grow their businesses.

“Our goal as a Chamber of Commerce is to help Hispanic owned businesses grow and thus increase economic development,” said Synthia. “And as part of that goal we have developed a strategy to help immigrant entrepreneurs operate their businesses outside of the shadows.” This effort is an example of the Hispano Chamber’s aligned contribution with the Albuquerque Integration Initiative. The immigrant community is one of the fastest growing segments of the population in New Mexico, and a huge economic opportunity. “Not to mention,” Synthia astutely observed, “coming here from another country is already an entrepreneurial act itself.” The opportunity for economic growth is palpable.

While the initial goal of the program was to engage 50 to 60 low to moderate income students, the tremendous need has allowed the Hispano Chamber to graduate over 150 immigrant entrepreneurs.

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Integration Initiative:

The *Emprendedores* program supports low to moderate income immigrant entrepreneurs and focuses on small business creation and growth. Synthia Jaramillo, the Hispano Chamber VP, is part of the Albuquerque Integration Initiative team.



COLLABORATION AFOOT

Three Mayor's Prize for Entrepreneurship Winners Provide Interesting Updates.

"The Mayor's Prize was really important for as we looked at the entrepreneurship sector in Albuquerque and explored ways that we can strengthen it. We are excited to see the results from the resources received." Robin Brulé, Chief Executive Strategist, Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative.

The Mayor's Prize for Entrepreneurship is a new partnership between the City of Albuquerque, the Albuquerque Community Foundation, and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The Prize, which amounted to just under \$200,000.00 in 2015, seeks to support bold ideas that create and grow new companies in Albuquerque, but through the lens of mission-driven nonprofits. From 27 applicants, three winners were selected in 2015 to share the inaugural prize: Global Ties ABQ, Technology Ventures Corporation, and WESST. Last week the three organizations caught up with Prize funders and made clear that some very interesting collaboration is afoot.

Each of the Mayor's Prize winners takes a different approach to supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Albuquerque: TVC focuses on technology commercialization, and the Mayor's Prize for Entrepreneurship has expanded its efforts to second stage companies; Global Ties ABQ focuses on international business, and is now not only receiving visitors from the likes of Kazakhstan and Indonesia, but as a result of the Prize is training local NM businesses to expand their markets abroad; And WESST is building on its Creative Pie program that provides 360° support and training for creative businesses in an effort to expand the creative economy and to financially support founders and grow jobs.

The room was filled with energy as each Prize winner shared updates from their programs. It was less a "report back" and more a quick-fire collaborative session. TVC had unexpected ties to a group of retired "Sandians" (fondly referring to employees of Sandia National Labs) who focus on developing clever ways to ship strangely shaped and fragile things, which could help solve some major shipping challenges faced by some of WESST's Creative Pie program participants who make pottery or sculpture. WESST shared some international business connections, supporting Global Ties in its efforts to link local businesses to resources, and each program leader walked away with more ideas to continue building momentum.

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative:

The Mayor's Prize has offered an opportunity for aligned action to be put to work.

• OPPORTUNITY:

There will be upcoming opportunities for entrepreneurs through the Mayor's Prize winners. Please keep an eye on their social media to stay informed and help to spread the word.



RESEARCH THAT MEANS BUSINESS

Albuquerque organizations research immigrant entrepreneurship for meaningful results

“There is potential to tap into hundreds of immigrant businesses that are currently operating informally to help them shift into formal businesses. Those hundreds of newly formalized businesses would mean additional revenue on the government side as a result of increased tax contributions, as well as on the side of the business owner. And those dollars circulate in the community, making this a win-win.” Andrea Plaza, Executive Director, Encuentro.

Since January of this year, a collaboration of Albuquerque nonprofits and economic development organizations has been conducting research to collect, catalogue, and analyze feedback and stories from the immigrant entrepreneurship sector. The research is designed to foster the common language and accountability measures needed as the Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative’s Action Teams begin

building and piloting programs like the Navigator Program that will kick off later this year.

The research team, which includes Encuentro, the Historic District Improvement Company, MediaDesk NM and the South Valley Economic Development Center, has collected hours of first-hand, personal accounts of immigrant entrepreneurship from bilingual business consultants and educational instructors. During January, audio interviews were conducted with members of CNM, WESST, the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce, and Encuentro, and each interview was then catalogued and analyzed.

An Executive Summary has been created from these first-hand accounts and feedback, which helps to clarify what gaps need to be filled and what linkages made for Spanish-speaking immigrant entrepreneurs to succeed in starting and building businesses in Albuquerque. In addition, it has opened an opportunity to share a common language as the Integration Initiative moves to implementation. If curiosity strikes you, which hopefully it will, the Summary is linked in this month’s newsletter (April, 2016).

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative:

This is part of the Albuquerque Integration Initiative’s intent to be data-driven and guided by collective action.

• OPPORTUNITY:

Knowing where we are and aligning our vision to move forward is central to the success of the Integration Initiative in Albuquerque.



PEDAL TO THE METAL

Albuquerque Welcomes its Sixth Business Accelerator

"We have a lot of ideas in Albuquerque, but many die on the vine for lack of support. The emergence of now six business accelerators in Albuquerque signals growth in our collective efforts to get the right support to entrepreneurs at the right time." Gary Oppedahl, Director of the Economic Development Department, City of Albuquerque.

Two years ago in Albuquerque the word "accelerator" probably conjured images of fast cars and open roads. But those days are numbered as Albuquerque welcomes its sixth business accelerator into a growing entrepreneurship ecosystem. Soon the word "accelerator" will be synonymous with the quickened pace of growing start-ups.

The most recent addition to the business accelerator cohort in Albuquerque is the New Mexico Start-Up Factory II, which focuses on cultivating valuable intellectual property from "behind the fence" and transforming it into consumer-ready products and high-growth companies (à la tech transfer). After a unanimous vote from the Albuquerque City

Council early this January, the New Mexico Start-Up Factory II was allocated \$200,000 in Economic Development Action Account (EDAct) funds. Start-Up Factory II is expected to churn out twice as many companies twice as fast as its predecessor, The Start-Up Factory, which successfully launched six new tech-focused companies to date.

Gary Oppedahl, Director of the Economic Development Department at City of Albuquerque, shared some staggering facts about the economic potential in tech transfer. He stated, "Research in New Mexico is a multi-billion dollar industry, but much of the intellectual property created in the process stays behind the fence or in our research laboratories." With all this talk of potential I've taken to imagining our labs and research institutions as big economic engines that just need a jump-start to gather speed. Gary said, "We need to keep working until we find the mix that gets that research out into the private sector to create meaningful jobs." Start-Up Factory II is part of this mix. Alongside other supports for entrepreneurs and resources to inspire meaningful tech transfer opportunities, Start-Up Factory II is well positioned to speed up the process and help ensure the business model and the team behind it are smart, informed and well-positioned to create viable, consumer-ready products and high-growth businesses. Sounds like we're ready, set, go!

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• COMMONALITIES with the Albuquerque Integration Initiative:

Focus on start-up success, local business development and job creation

• OPPORTUNITY:

"We know the more we connect, communicate and collaborate, the more good things are going to happen."
-Gary O



INNOVATE ABQ BREAKS GROUND

Innovate ABQ partners and developers break ground on the Lobo Rainforest Building, kicking off the first phase at the core site

“It is a new day. For real.” Richard J. Berry, Mayor, City of Albuquerque.

The first of an anticipated four-phase development framework for the Innovate ABQ site kicked off last week with a ceremonial groundbreaking for the Lobo Rainforest Building at the seven-acre site on the corner of Broadway Boulevard and Central Avenue. The ceremony brought together a cross-section of public and private sector leaders who celebrated the Innovate ABQ project, but also recognized the partnerships that have made creating a robust innovation district in Albuquerque an achievable and now dawning reality.

The Lobo Rainforest Building, which has an expected completion date of August 2017, will be an almost 160,000 square-foot, six-story mixed use space. The first floor will house education, business and community spaces including STC.UNM and its incubator Cecchi VentureLab, the UNM innovationAcademy, Innovate New Mexico, an Air Force research lab, a Nusenda Credit Union branch office and a café. The second through sixth floors will be dedicated to student housing and a small fitness center.

Funding for the site came from both the public and private sector, which demonstrated the urgency and the opportunity for change in Albuquerque. Mayor Berry, alongside other speakers, commented at length about the unprecedented collaboration that has brought this vision to life, saying, “Public-private partnerships are the way of the future.” One of the key private partners, Nusenda Credit Union, made a three million dollar investment in the site. Their President, Terry Laudick, commented, “Nusenda is trying to take a lead position for the private sector continuing to move forward in this collaboration to bring economic viability to New Mexico...We have finally come to the point here where we will begin to see the fruition of four years of very hard work. We are quite pleased and excited for this catalyzing event.”

And while the event catalyzed the first of many future celebrations as this project comes into being, it was also a reminder to keep our eyes on the prize; that prize being dramatic improvement in the lives of low income people in our city and state. Alvin Warren who was present representing the W.K. Kellogg Foundation poignantly said, “It is going to take all the partners to focus and ensure that not just Innovate ABQ but all the efforts in Albuquerque focused on economic development benefit everybody...because in the end, if we want to keep the best and brightest of New Mexico here then we have to make sure that everything is accessible to *all* the best and brightest.”

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• COMMONALITIES:

Innovate ABQ is one of the eight Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative Action Teams. Action Teams collectively develop and implement shared action plans aimed at our priority outcomes.

Albuquerque Living Cities
Integration Initiative