

'Watch out, Warner Brothers': Las Cruces lands new film studio, which will invest in old seed barn property off Amador



LAS CRUCES – The old seed barn in the 900 block of West Amador Avenue — the metal building that towers above the Brewer Oil Company fill site — is becoming a film production studio, officials announced at the Rio Grande Theatre downtown on Wednesday.

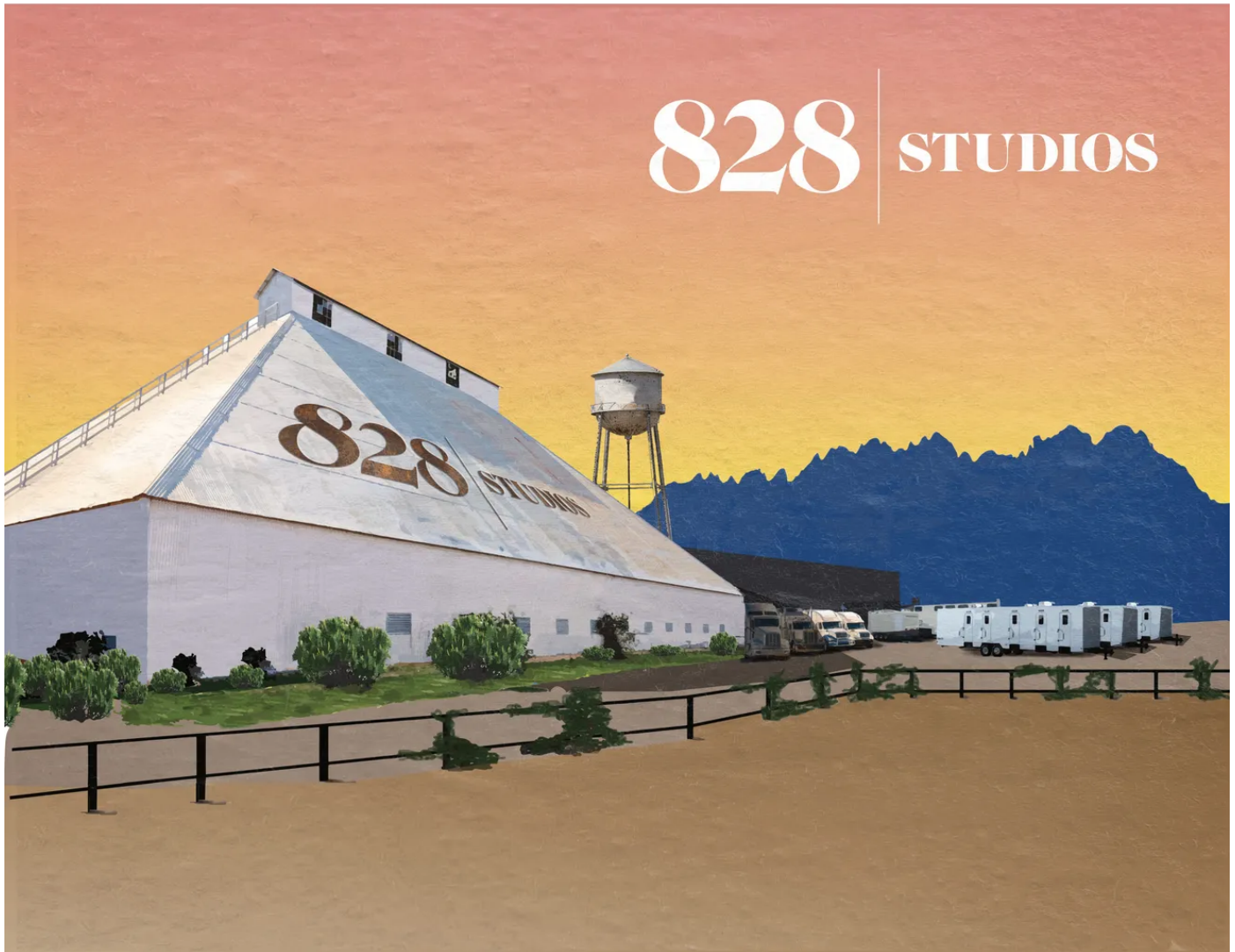
Representatives from the nonprofit Film Las Cruces were joined by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, state Economic Development Secretary Alicia

Keyes, state lawmakers, Doña Ana County and City of Las Cruces officials and other distinguished guests at the theater to announce 828 Productions would locate a new film studio on 35 acres of land in the Amador Próximo area. The [Film Las Cruces website](#) refers to the site as the old Santa Fe Mining Company.

How much money will be invested in the new film studio?

828 Productions, a California-based company, will invest \$75 million over the next six years to construct a 300,000-square-foot studio and 20-acre back lot, resulting in at least 100 full-time, year-round jobs in Las Cruces. In May, 828 Productions acquired a 7,500 square-foot office building in downtown Las Cruces for training, post-production and visual effects work.

The state will support the new studio with a \$3 million pledge from the Local Economic Development Act job creation fund, which is contingent upon the company meeting its 100-job target. The city is considering an additional \$897,000 in local LEDA funds and \$2.8 million to support cinematic infrastructure, funding allotments which are both pending city council approval and a final project participation agreement. The city would be the fiscal agent for the economic assistance.



The announcement represents the third major state economic development partnership with a film production company in recent years; Netflix and NBCUniversal have both brought studios to Albuquerque. It's the first studio to be headquartered in Las Cruces.

Why was Las Cruces picked for the new film studio?

During the event, Todd Lundbohm, Founder and CEO of 828 Productions, told the audience he became enamored with Las Cruces quickly when he first visited for a film production last summer. He fell in love with Organ Mountain sunrises and was charmed by the friendly, good-natured locals he

met.

"We were looking for a home for 828 Studios and fell in love with Las Cruces," Lundbohm said in a statement. "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."

The land on which the 828 studio is planned "has existing structures that will provide soundstage and set construction space," a press release stated. Lundbohm pointed out the water tower sitting behind the seed barn in a promotional art poster and proclaimed "Watch out, Warner Brothers!"

"This awesome job that we get to do of making movies takes a lot of hard work and some magic," Lundbohm told attendees. "So this is the place to do it."

More: [Las Cruces City Council updated on film activity and downtown economic development](#)

Film Las Cruces Board President and State Sen. Jeff Steinborn said this new "film district" will bring much needed development to the Amador Próximo area of the city and credited the state's rural "uplift" tax incentive with the unprecedented number of film productions Las Cruces has seen lately. The state applies an additional 5 percent rebate on top of its base film tax credit to projects "for direct production expenditures and postproduction expenditures" that occur in New Mexico 60 miles or more outside Bernalillo or Santa Fe counties.

Steinborn implored officials to assist local film advocates in bringing a television series to Las Cruces to provide stable work for the fledgling film

studio.

828 Studios intends to shoot its first production by the end of 2022 and expects to spend \$350 million over the next decade on productions.

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"We are showcasing here, again, that film matters. Film works," Lujan Grisham said to attendees during the announcement event. "And it creates an ecosystem of incredible opportunities, for frankly everyone, but most importantly for New Mexicans ... We've seen a sevenfold increase in production work in rural communities across the state ... Most of that is happening right here (in Las Cruces)."

"828 Studios chose Las Cruces because of Gov. Lujan Grisham's commitment to film and television job growth," said Keyes in a statement. "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."

More: [New Mel Gibson movie films is historic Las Cruces building](#)

828 has financed and produced such recent films as K. Asher Levin's comedy "Helen's Dead," Robert Rippberger's thriller "Those Who Walk Away," Camille Delmarre's action film "Assassin Club," and SXSW Grand Jury Prize winner "The Fallout."

Film Las Cruces was for a time using an old bottling plant on Valley Drive as studio space, but the organization had to vacate the warehouse in March 2021 after the owner sold the building and the new owner didn't continue leasing the space.

"We had a few stops and starts," said Las Cruces Mayor Pro Tem Kasandra Gandara. "Frankly, there were times when many felt this may not ever come to fruition. Fortunately for us, Film Las Cruces and their advocates remain steady and this industry in Las Cruces is alive and well."

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