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Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Energy Conservation and Management Division announces first Grid Modernization Program demonstration project with the City of Albuquerque

Santa Fe, NM – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department’s (EMNRD) Energy Conservation and Management Division (ECMD) announces the Grid Modernization Program’s inaugural demonstration project. Projects eligible for funding deploy or test a grid modernization technology that could become widely adopted to lead to a modern and secure electricity grid. ECMD is providing funding to the City of Albuquerque’s Municipal Development Department, Energy and Sustainability Management Division (ESMD), to build the Balanced Resource Acquisition and Information Network (BRAIN). BRAIN is a data center and computer platform that will give the City real-time visibility into its existing and future energy storage, renewable generation, and building controls resources. With the BRAIN innovation, the City envisions a more resilient energy system. The project exemplifies how to make the electric grid more energy efficient and flexible.

“The city of Albuquerque’s BRAIN project kicks off the grid modernization grant program with smart technology and data deployment that will solve problems on the grid,” said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst.

A modern electric grid is required for New Mexico to achieve deep decarbonization, take advantage of the state’s abundant renewable resources, spur economic growth, and improve the lives of residents by lowering carbon emissions and providing more opportunities for New Mexicans to engage in the energy transition. The Grid Modernization Roadmap and Grant Program Act of 2020 allows EMNRD to support pilot projects that make improvements to electric distribution or transmission infrastructure to enhance electric distribution or transmission grid reliability, grid security, demand response capability, customer service or energy efficiency. Eligible applicants include municipalities and county governments; state agencies; state universities; public schools; post-secondary education institutions; and Indian nations, tribes and pueblos.

The 2020 Act also stipulated criteria for evaluating projects including economic impact and broader educational opportunities.

“The BRAIN initiative will require modern mechanical (HVAC) systems and controls technicians to enable Albuquerque’s and similar systems across the state,” said Saif Ismail, Albuquerque’s

Energy and Sustainability Manager. In addition, Ismail said, “The ESMD and BRAIN will be a ‘learning lab’ for the community with a focus on real time energy performance transparency for City of Albuquerque residents, and the State more broadly.”

“We are pleased to work with such dedicated energy stewards at the City’s ESMD on a project that aligns with the state’s goals for grid modernization,” said Louise Martinez, Director of ECMD.

The project will cost \$580,000. By combining an FY21 state allocation with federal State Energy Program formula funding, ECMD is covering about 52% of the total. The City of Albuquerque is funding 38% and the City’s subcontractor, locally based Mountain Vector, will contribute ten percent in no-cost work hours.

The BRAIN project is expected to be completed by June 30, 2022. ECMD continues to review and approve proposals under the existing [request for applications](#). All approved projects will be placed in a queue pending future funding availability.

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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