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New Mexico Angels Welcome Entrepreneurs to Monthly ‘Office Hours’ at WESST

By Finance New Mexico

The folks at WESST never stop thinking of new ways to help small businesses succeed and thus strengthen New Mexico’s economy.

The 27-year-old nonprofit’s newest partnership is with New Mexico Angels — a 501(c)6 organization that, besides its educational and promotional mission, acts as an intermediary between its members and early stage businesses that present promising investment opportunities.

NMA (www.NMAngels.com) has been around since 1999. Just this year the organization began hosting office hours from 3 to 5 p.m. on the first Monday of each month at the WESST Enterprise Center in Albuquerque so entrepreneurs can seek information and advice about financing and angel investing.



New Mexico Angels President John Chavez at the 2016 Angel Capital Summit in Denver; photo courtesy New Mexico Angels

On a Mission

New Mexico Angels are affluent individuals and groups of individuals that invest their own money into growing businesses in expectation of sharing the prosperity when that company attains market leadership and goes public or is sold. In return for taking that risk, angel investors seek outstanding returns within a short period.

The companies that typically benefit from angel investment are startups or companies poised for rapid growth. Such companies lack the track record to qualify for traditional loans, and this makes angel investors an important resource for entrepreneurs looking for sufficient capital to take a business to the next stage.

Angel investors are not as risk-averse as institutional lenders, but they attempt to minimize their losses by doing a substantial amount of due diligence before investing. And, because they have a stake in the enterprise, angel investors expect to assist the business by serving on its board, offering contacts and sharing their business and investment expertise.

NMA is not a venture fund and doesn't make direct investments. Rather, it's an intermediary between the entrepreneur and the angel investors in its network, negotiating terms and brokering deals. But the organization collaborates with many national venture-capital firms; if additional financing is necessary after the initial capital infusion, NMA will help the company connect with potential later-stage investors.

NMA has invested more than \$11.5 million in New Mexico businesses in the 17 years since its formation.

A Good Match

NMA's entrepreneurial advocacy is compatible with the goals of WESST, and the new collaboration makes sense for both organizations.

WESST has nurtured and financed small businesses since its formation, offering loans and advice to aspiring entrepreneurs in six sites around the state and providing a space for emerging businesses at its mixed-use incubation facility in downtown Albuquerque. Some of the money available for WESST loans comes from the New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation, the organization that manages a self-sustaining fund designed to promote economic development by providing equity and debt capital to small businesses around the state.

The NMA office hours at the Enterprise Center — with WESST employees also available to answer basic questions about starting or growing a business — allow entrepreneurs one-stop shopping for a full range of services. No reservation is needed, as the service is first come, first served.

For more information about the New Mexico Angels office hours, visit <https://www.wesst.org/event/nm-angels-office-hours-at-wesst/>.

Finance New Mexico is a public service initiative to assist individuals and businesses with obtaining skills and funding resources for their business or idea. To learn more, go to www.FinanceNewMexico.org. Sponsored by:

