

SALSA BUSINESS EXPANDS WITH HELP FOR NEW MEXICO MEP

ABOUT ANDELE'S TORTILLERIA DE MESILLA, LLC DBA OL' GRINGO CHILE.

Rachel Schneider had limited experience in the food industry when her father purchased Ol' Gringo Chile Company in 2014 to jar the salsas he served at Andele, the restaurant he opened in 1996 and ran with Rachel's sister. When Rachel's father died of cancer just 6 months later leaving her to navigate the business on her own, Rachel set about improving equipment and business practices and increasing demand by working with restaurants and other customers to make products under those clients' labels. The Las Cruces, New Mexico, business now employs 11 workers producing a wide range of salsas in a 10,000 square-foot building that is five times larger than the original. Products are sold at more than 50 retail stores in New Mexico and Texas and online.

THE CHALLENGE. The pace of production was taking a toll on workers who prepared everything by hand. When Schneider learned about New Mexico MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, from the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, she reached out for help with becoming more efficient and profitable without sacrificing quality or losing staff. She hoped New Mexico MEP could help add automation to the all-manual high-mix operation that produced many different products - and a lot of it.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. New Mexico MEP Innovation Director Jeff Abrams conducted onsite time studies to determine how much more Ol' Gringo could produce using existing equipment and which processes would benefit from more sophisticated automation and practices that reduce worker stress. He suggested facility changes that laid the groundwork for incorporating new machinery, and he worked with Schneider to identify, evaluate, and acquire new equipment. In 2023, New Mexico MEP helped the company acquire and implement an enterprise resource planning system (ERP) to simplify some of the most time-consuming aspects of food production.

"[New Mexico MEP's] Jeff Abrams is an incredible resource. Because there was no turnkey solution for our niche operation, Jeff collaborated with our team to identify custom solutions. His manufacturing background and work with similar-sized companies in the same industry as ours gives him unique insight that he shared with us."

-Rachel Schneider, President

RESULTS

This capacity growth will require an increase of **25%** new jobs when fully realized.



25% reduction in filling time expected



Projects will allow company to double capacity

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