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## **Group Moving Forward on NM Ghost Town for Research**

*By JERI CLAUSING  
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.*

The research firm behind plans to build a ghost town for scientific testing in New Mexico has created a local subsidiary and hired a leading technology and defense contractor to begin developing its one-of-a-kind research center.

Pegasus Global Holdings of Washington, D.C., said Wednesday that its new subsidiary has contracted with Science Applications International Corp. to help it with site selection and in-depth financial and business analyses for the planned \$200 million-plus ghost town.

The project has been billed as a first of its kind in the U.S., creating a place for scientists at the state's universities, federal labs and military installations to test their innovations and rub shoulders with investors.

Plans call for the project to be modeled after a typical American town of 35,000 people, complete with highways, houses and commercial buildings, old and new. No one will live there. The activity instead will take place underground, where researchers will monitor tests of everything from renewable energy innovations to intelligent traffic systems, next-generation wireless networks and smart-grid cyber security systems.

The project - known as the Center for Innovation, Testing and Evaluation, or CITE - is drawing interest from countries and companies around the world, Pegasus CEO Bob Brumley said.

Interest is especially high with countries like Saudi Arabia, which already have their own ghost towns for research, or "smart cities," Brumley said.

The difference, he said, is that Saudi Arabia has five separate smart cities that are designed to test different types of systems and technologies separately. By creating a place where tests of different systems can run simultaneously, he said, researchers will be able to tell if that "fabulous new energy system might be antagonistic to the wireless communication system," he said. "It's all one big eco system."

Brumley declined to elaborate on what locations might be considered, saying only that site selection will be a major focus over the next 90 days.

"We have gotten tremendous creative ideas about where to put it," he said, noting that after initial reports came out about his plans he was offered "all of Harding County."

The idea, Brumley said, is to find about 15 square miles near a major population center and within about a 45-mile radius of one of the state's major research facilities, like White Sands Missile Range or Los Alamos or Sandia national labs.

But he emphasized that even though classified work likely will be conducted alongside private proprietary testing, "we are not going to be blowing stuff up."

"This is a place to go test equipment. We might test sensors. ... Where they go after that is not our business," he said. "Our business is that they have a good operating history."

The goal is to break ground in June 2012 and open in June 2014, Brumley said.

Pegasus' new subsidiary, CITE Development LLC of Albuquerque, also said it has contracted with Advanced Insights Group of Albuquerque to manage a public/private advisory board that will oversee the project. The board will hold its first meeting Thursday.