

## Billion Dollar Ghost City is Tech Lab

Written by Bob Snyder  
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Smart grid, smart cities, smart homes, smart roads...how do you research these mega-projects?

**You build a \$1 billion city in the desert.** You model the fake town after a real city (Rock Hill, South Carolina in USA, population 66,000) and build it complete with highways, houses and commercial buildings—even some old buildings mixed in with new ones just like in the real city. No one will live there, but each and every house will include appliances, plumbing, and other necessities.

This built-to-order town lets researchers test new infrastructure without interfering in anyone's everyday life...because there isn't anyone.

It's a research facility but it's also an empty city, a veritable ghost town. They call this CITE project "a first-of-its kind" smart city but given its cost and mission, it may just be "a one-of-a kind."

Thankfully it's not taxpayer money but a private firm building this city-as-a lab, the **CITE** (Center for Innovation, Technology and Evaluation).

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One researcher may test technologies on smart grids and another could test self-driving cars...and no one will complain. (Except maybe the researchers who are housed in an underground laboratory complex spanning the development while the executives running operations sit above-ground in an innovative administration campus.)

It has an airport, power plants, a water desalination and purification plant, urban and rural areas, intelligent traffic system, and more...

In addition to energy and transport, the site promises extensive next-gen wireless so everybody who is not there can get better internet access than we can.

This high tech facility is located about 15 miles west of Hobbs, New Mexico, not far from the Texas border. The project is expected to create 350 permanent jobs and about 3500 indirect jobs in Hobbs, a community of about 43,000 people.

Testing technology in a city without people may explain how so many technologies seem to ignore the human element. No people, no real problems. In this case, it's just the energy utilities, transport, high tech and telecom sectors...why worry?

Watch [Video of CITE Infrastructure](#)

Go [High Tech Ghost Town Enables USA Researchers](#)

Go [Japanese Research Contrasts with USA Approach; Panasonic Works with Fujisawa Smart Town](#)