



CASE STUDY

High Desert Relief

High Desert Relief, a cultivation facility in Albuquerque, NM started in 2010 with the goal of having the perfect grow, so they turned to Surna Inc. for their climate control.

DESIGNING A "MASTERPIECE"

Climate Control Fit For High-Quality Medicinal Cultivation

Jeff Robb and Drew Stuart began their partnership in cannabis production back in 2010. The pair fitted out their first medical marijuana cultivation operation in a horse barn outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico. "We really had to start from nothing," Robb recalled, "and to get to the point we're at now is a pretty amazing accomplishment."

From their humble beginnings, Robb and Stuart have built their business over the last decade to become award-winning producers of high-quality medicinal cannabis. They have owned and operated four cultivation facilities and several dispensaries, with yet another expansion to their grow operation already in the works.

The team faced a challenge when it came time to start designing their fourth grow. "We've learned the hard way what not to do, and the key to success comes down to the environmental controls and the ability to maintain the proper environment for your plants," Stuart said. The duo planned to create a facility that would give them the best controllability possible, so they could be confident each harvest would pass testing standards. "The microbiology standards of New Mexico, including total yeast and mold, is only 1,000 CFUs, whereas the rest of the country, minus Delaware, is 10,000." Stuart added, "So there are a lot of outdoor growers who are having trouble passing quality analysis tests because they cannot control the environment."

Ultimately, there was a lot more on the line than back in the days of the horse barn. Stuart and Robb wanted a climate control system that would enable them to "set it and forget it." They wanted to have full control over their environment without the worry or hassle of system or equipment failures. An unreliable climate is likely to affect product quality—at best, patients would be receiving inconsistent medicine; at worst, entire harvests would fail and require disposal. This would affect not only Albuquerque patients but also the families who now rely on High Desert Relief for employment and income. "As we

20% INCREASE IN YIELD WITH SAME AMOUNT OF LIGHTS

36% THC ACHIEVED

25% LESS ENERGY CONSUMED

*Comparisons reflect changes that occurred after installing LED lights and a Surna climate control system



JEFF ROBB (LEFT) AND DREW STUART (RIGHT) CO-OWNERS, HIGH DESERT RELIEF



get bigger and bigger, and more people depend on us, everybody relies on [our crops] to be consistent and us to grow this good, quality medicine," Robb explained. "We are self-taught, and we quickly learned that controlling the environment was by far the most important factor."

For their "masterpiece," as Stuart proudly refers to their fourth grow facility, they were prepared to invest in a reliable, energy-efficient climate system that would be consistent—providing steady humidity and temperature with only very minute fluctuations. With such a system, they would never need to be concerned about their system going down. The partners did not take this decision lightly. "This is a big investment, I mean it's a lot of up-front cost," Robb commented. After doing some research, they came across Surna's website and were interested in the prospect of a company with climate control experience specific to cannabis. As Robb recalled, "We really valued having access to Surna's expertise. Before Surna, we'd reach out to local HVAC companies, and they didn't really know what was going on. I think they could give us recommendations and that type of thing, but when we got on a conference call with Surna, they were asking us about what types of lights we were using, what equipment we had, how much water we were feeding the plants; all those questions we had never been asked before."

After visiting a Denver facility to see a Surna system in action and comparing a few quotes, High Desert Relief was ready to invest in their climate. Surna outfitted their facility with a closed-loop, chilled-water system with fan coils and dehumidifiers to regulate the temperature and humidity of the grow spaces. Stuart was especially excited to be able to rely on the redundant design of their new system. "We're never going to be down. We wanted to guarantee that as long as we had power to the facility, our air conditioners would work, and we've experienced that. It's just 'set it and forget it.'"

Once installation was underway, Robb and Stuart agreed that they felt reassured by the level of service and support they received from Surna. The process was simple, and Surna was on site when needed, including during the initial system start-up.

High Desert Relief is confident in their decision to choose Surna. "We've always recommended the Surna system for as long as we've had it because it's just another thing we don't have to worry about," Stuart remarked. "I don't want to say that it's simple, but in principle, it is simple; there aren't a lot of things that can go wrong with it. You could almost describe it with the word 'relaxing.'" With their climate totally under control, High Desert Relief has become an award-winning producer. "We've hit 36% THC. This last harvest, we had seven strains that were above 30% [THC]. And the yield—with the same amount of lights, we got about a 20% increase. It's a combination of all these factors, but any grower will tell you, especially indoors, it's all about the environmental control and the ability to have that perfect. And I think we've achieved that through our partnership with Surna."

The pair prides themselves on treating their growing spaces like laboratories—cleaning them, maintaining them, and controlling their environments—all in the pursuit of creating consistently safe and high-quality medicinal marijuana products for their customers. "I am proud of the medicine we produce," said Robb.

As High Desert Relief looks to the future, they plan to implement similar designs in their upcoming projects. "We're working on another expansion. Our electrical engineer called our power company, and we're pulling a quarter of our old power with our new LEDs and our Surna system. It's just so efficient," Stuart claimed. Ultimately, it was Surna's expertise and cannabis-specific knowledge that made High Desert Relief choose Surna, but it is their system's quality and performance that has made them loyal. "We are finally in a facility with a Surna system, and it's just one less thing we have to worry about now."

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