

Company donates plane to New Mexico police

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ALBUQUERQUE -- An Albuquerque company is donating a plane to the New Mexico State Police at a time when the state has been shrinking its aerial fleet.

Police officials said they'll use the utility plane for various missions, including narcotics interdiction and search and rescue, the Albuquerque Journal reported.

Pete Dunn of CSI Aviation said the Australian-designed Seeker aircraft that his company is donating will perform some of the same missions as a helicopter now used by State Police but at less cost.

The donated two-seat plane has a cockpit like those of some helicopters and has a pusher-type engine in the back of the fuselage.

"We're hoping it increases our capabilities but also reduces our operating costs," said Deputy Chief Steve Kassetas. Kassetas said the police agency plans to phase out a Cessna turboprop airplane that it now has.

The sale of a twin-engine turboprop plane to a Santa Fe man for \$575,000 left the state with two State Police aircraft, plus a 2006 Beechcraft King Air, which can be used by state officials and the Children's Medical Services program.