



Nearly a decade after the closure of its last US factory, Apple is to create 2,000 manufacturing, engineering and construction jobs at a new plant in Arizona.

The California technology titan is beginning to shift production back to its home market, with the creation of its second US plant in under a year. It is understood the renewable energy powered facility in Mesa, Arizona, will produce laboratory grown sapphire crystals of the kind used in the iPhone 5S fingerprint scanner.

The initiative is a joint venture with crystal growth equipment specialist GT Advanced Technologies, which said Monday it had signed a multi-year agreement with Apple to provide furnaces to make sapphire. The material, which has been used in watch faces, is more scratch-resistant than glass and may eventually be used to make Apple's screens.

"Apple will have an incredibly positive economic impact for Arizona," said governor Janice Brewer. "Their investment in renewable energy will also be greening our power grid, and creating significant new solar and geothermal power sources for the state."

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