



OPPD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Omaha Public Power District (“OPPD” or “District”) was held on Thursday, January 16 at 5:00 p.m. at the Omaha Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, 2nd Floor Legislative Chamber, Omaha, Nebraska and via WebEx audio and video conference.

Present in person at the Civic Center were Directors A. E. Bogner, M. R. Core, S. E. Howard, J. L. Hudson, C. C. Moody, M. G. Spurgeon and E. H. Williams. M. J. Cavanaugh was absent. Also present in person were L. J. Fernandez, President and Chief Executive Officer, Messr. T. F. Meyerson of the Fraser Stryker law firm, General Counsel for the District, E. H. Lane, Sr. Board Operations Specialist, and other members of the OPPD Board meeting logistics support staff. Chair E. H. Williams presided and E. H. Lane recorded the minutes. Members of the executive leadership team present in person included J. M. Bishop, K. W. Brown, C. V. Fleener, S. M. Focht, G. M. Langel, T. D. McAreavey, M. V. Purnell, B. A. Underwood and T. R. Via.

Board Agenda Item 1: Chair Opening Statement

Chair Williams gave a brief opening statement, including reminders for using the WebEx audio and video conferencing platform.

Board Agenda Item 2: Safety Briefing

Josh Clark, Manager, Protective services, provided physical safety reminders. L. J. Fernandez, President and CEO, provided psychological safety reminders, including current safety focus reminders about: (i) Slips/Trips/Falls; (ii) Winter Weather Hazards; and (iii) Cold Weather Fire Safety.

Board Agenda Item 3: Guidelines for Participation

Chair Williams then presented the guidelines for the conduct of the meeting and instructions on the public comment process in the room and using WebEx audio and video conferencing features.

Board Agenda Item 4: Roll Call

Ms. Lane took roll call of the Board. All members were present in person.

Board Agenda Item 5: Announcement regarding public notice of meeting

Ms. Lane read the following:

“Notice of the time and place of this meeting was publicized by notifying the area news media; by publicizing same in the Omaha World Herald, OPPD Outlets

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newsletter, oppd.com and social media; by displaying such notice on the Arcade Level of Energy Plaza; and by e-mailing such notice to each of the District's Directors on January 10, 2025.

A copy of the proposed agenda for this meeting has been maintained, on a current basis, and is readily available for public inspection in the office of the District's Corporate Secretary.

Additionally, a copy of the Open Meetings Act is available for inspection on oppd.com and in this meeting room."

Board Consent Action Items:

6. Approval of the November 2024 Financial Report, December 2024 Meeting Minutes, and the January 16, 2025 Agenda
7. Governance Committee Charter Revision – Resolution No. 6685
8. Standing Committee Annual Reports – Resolution No. 6686

It was moved and seconded that the Board approve the consent action items.

Chair Williams noted the Board discussed the action items during the All Committees meeting held on Tuesday, January 14.

Chair Williams then asked for public comment. There were no comments from the public in attendance at the meeting.

Chair Williams then asked for public comment on WebEx. There were no comments.

Thereafter, the vote was recorded as follows: Bogner – Yes; Cavanaugh – Absent; Core – Yes; Howard – Yes; Hudson – Yes; Moody – Yes; Spurgeon – Yes; Williams – Yes. The motion carried (7-0).

Board Discussion Action Items

9. Election of Board Officers – Resolution No. 6687

Chair Williams moved to approve the discussion action item, and it was seconded by Director Bogner. Chair Williams asked for Board member questions or comments.

Chair Williams then asked for public comment. There were no comments from the public in attendance at the meeting.

Chair Williams asked for comments from members of the public on WebEx. There were no comments.

Chair Williams asked for comments from the Board. There were comments made by Director Core, Director Moody, Director Williams and CEO Fernandez.

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Thereafter, the vote was recorded as follows: Bogner – Yes; Cavanaugh – Absent; Core – Yes; Howard – Yes; Hudson – Yes; Moody – Yes; Spurgeon – Yes; Williams – Yes. The motion carried (7-0).

10. Board Standing Committee Assignments – Resolution No. 6688

Director Core moved to approve the discussion action item, and it was seconded by Director Williams. Director Core provided comments on the committee assignments.

Chair Williams then asked for public comment. There were no comments from the public in attendance at the meeting.

Chair Williams asked for comments from members of the public on WebEx. There were no comments.

Chair Williams asked for comments from the Board.

Thereafter, the vote was recorded as follows: Bogner – Yes; Cavanaugh – Absent; Core – Yes; Howard – Yes; Hudson – Yes; Moody – Yes; Spurgeon – Yes; Williams – Yes. The motion carried (7-0).

Board Agenda Item 17: President's Report

President Fernandez next presented the following information:

- December 2024 Baseload Generation
- December 2024 Balancing Generation
- December 2024 Renewables
- Month of Giving and Holiday Giving
- Holiday Volunteering
- Heat the Streets Run & Walk for Warmth
- New Small Medium Business Direct Install Program
- Greener Together Program
- In Memoriam – Mervin Stangl

Board Agenda Item 18: Opportunity for comment on other items of District Business

Chair Williams asked for comments from the public in the room on other items of District business. There was one comment.

David Begley, 4611 S. 96th Street, Omaha, provided comments on solar projects and presented materials which are attached to the minutes.

Chair Williams asked for comments from members of the public on WebEx. There was one comment.

John Pollack, 1412 N. 35th Street, Omaha, provided a weather update.

There were no additional comments from the public in attendance at the meeting or via WebEx.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Signed by:

S. M. Focht

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S. M. Focht
Vice President – Corporate Strategy &
Governance and Assistant Secretary

DocuSigned by:

Erin H. Lane

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E. H. Lane
Sr. Board Operations Specialist

“If someone can prove me wrong and show me my mistake in any thought or action, I shall gladly change. I seek the truth, which never harmed anyone: the harm is to persist in one's own self-deception and ignorance.”

Marcus Aurelius

At the Lancaster County Board meeting on January 14, 2025, Tom Emerson, business manager for Local #265 testified under oath that none of Nebraska's wind and solar projects were constructed with union labor.

None!

That includes Platteview Solar and Pierce County Solar.

OPPD Board gives union members the shaft while fat cats get the cash.

If the Board is going to support Keynesian ditch digging projects, at least the unions should be digging the ditches.

French Nuclear Output Hits 2019 High While German Wind Drops

- Oil generation increases to fill the gap of lower wind levels
- Wind generation due to fall below 1 gigawatts over the weekend

Europe: The Fall of the Holy Renewable Empire

by Drieu Godefridi

December 27, 2024 at 5:00 am

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/21244/europe-germany-renewable-energy>

- Literally "flat, dark calm," Dunkelflaute is characterized by a simultaneous lack of wind and sun in winter, when demand for electricity in Germany is at its highest... On December 12 of this year, for example, German electricity production from wind and solar power was 1/30th the demand for it.
 - But this is "for the planet", right? Not even close. Despite its commitment to so-called green energies, Germany still has a high carbon footprint due to its increased reliance on coal and lignite to make up for energy shortfalls.
 - Germany's high electricity prices are leading to the relocation of its industry, as companies look for sites where energy costs are more affordable. How can you stay viable when you pay three times more for electricity than your competitors?
 - Whole swathes of Germany's proud industry are collapsing. We only remember the big names -- VW, BASF, Mercedes-Benz -- but every big company that disappears or downsizes takes with it a myriad of small and medium-sized enterprises that end up collapsing along with it.
 - Dependence on unreliable energy sources (wind, solar), combined with the hasty phase-out of nuclear power, has made Germany's electricity the most expensive in Europe and compromises the country's -- and ultimately the continent's -- energy autonomy.
-





Dependence on unreliable energy sources (wind, solar), combined with the hasty phase-out of nuclear power, has made Germany's electricity the most expensive in Europe and compromises the country's -- and ultimately the continent's -- energy autonomy. Pictured: An array of solar panels operated by the multinational energy company RWE, at the Hambacher Forst opencast lignite mine near Elsdorf, Germany, photographed on November 12, 2024. (Photo by Ina Fassbender/AFP via Getty Images)

Solar and wind power production falls drastically during unfavorable weather conditions. It happens, in fact, every year. This condition, however, now has far-reaching economic and environmental repercussions, revealing the flaws in an energy policy based on intermittent renewable energies. Why does Germany, while having one of the **highest carbon footprints**, now consume the most expensive electricity in Europe? How did the country lose its energy autonomy?

For the last fifteen years, Germany **invested** massively in solar and wind energy, while sabotaging its own nuclear power stations. **By 2023, renewable energies accounted for 55% of electricity production** in the country. In 2022, it was only 48%.

The main contribution to renewable energy has come from wind power, at 31% of total production, followed by solar power at 12%, biomass at 8%, and other renewable sources such as hydroelectricity for the remaining 3.4%. In 2024, renewable energy accounted for almost 60% of German electricity production in the first half of the year. This production level, however, is smoothed out over a given period and does not reflect moments of crisis such as the "Dunkelflaute."

Literally "flat, dark calm," Dunkelflaute is characterized by a simultaneous lack of wind and sun in winter, when demand for electricity in Germany is at its highest. These episodes last from a few days to several weeks, with wind and solar production sometimes falling to less than 20% of their capacity, and sometimes nothing. On December 12 of this year, for example, German electricity production from wind and solar power was 1/30th the demand for it.

Renewable policies would be bearable if they were based on a sustainable energy source -- indifferent to the weather -- such as nuclear power. In 2011, however, in the wake of the Fukushima disaster, Germany abruptly decided to phase out nuclear power, and gradually shut down fully operational plants. This decision reduced the country's capacity to produce stable, predictable electricity and instead made heating, cooling and so on cruelly vulnerable to fluctuations in renewable energy sources. In short, when there is neither wind nor sun in Germany, the lights go out.

The phase-out of nuclear power has left Germany incapable of being self-sufficient in energy, especially during Dunkelflaute. The country imports electricity on a massive scale from France, Denmark and Poland, and has to use coal and lignite to produce electricity. Germany's massive imports of electricity also lead to colossal increases in electricity prices for its neighbors.

The prices are indeed staggering. In 2024, the household price of electricity in Germany was the highest in Europe, at €400/MWh, reaching peaks of €900/MWh during Dunkelflaute episodes, compared to a much lower European average. By comparison, the average price in nuclear-powered France and Finland was €250/MWh over the same period (2024). And, in the United States, rates are 30% lower than in France. How is all that "sustainable" for Europe?

But this is "for the planet", right? Not even close. Despite its commitment to so-called green energies, Germany still has a high carbon footprint due to its increased reliance on coal and lignite to make up for energy shortfalls. In 2024, the country remains the second-largest emitter of CO₂ per unit of energy produced in Europe, with a significant proportion of electricity coming from fossil sources. Ten times more CO₂ per unit of energy produced than France.

Economic and geopolitical repercussions

Germany's high electricity prices are leading to the relocation of its industry, as companies look for sites where energy costs are more affordable. How can you stay viable when you pay three times more for electricity than your competitors? (Natural gas prices are even worse: five times more expensive in Europe than in the USA.)

Whole swathes of Germany's proud industry are collapsing. We only remember the big names -- VW, BASF, Mercedes-Benz -- but every big company that disappears or downsizes takes with it a myriad of small and medium-sized enterprises that end up collapsing along with it. Energy-intensive sectors such as metallurgy and chemicals are particularly hard hit.

making electricity unaffordable there and generating growing frustration. Discussions are emerging in Europe about withdrawing from certain energy agreements, particularly those relating to electricity imports.

In short, the Dunkelflaute is the symptom of a profound energy crisis, caused by an ideological, authoritarian, irrational and failed energy transition. Dependence on unreliable energy sources (wind, solar), combined with the hasty phase-out of nuclear power, has made Germany's electricity the most expensive in Europe and compromises the country's -- and ultimately the continent's -- energy autonomy. The consequences are manifold: environmental, with high CO₂ emissions; economic, with industry in steep decline, and geopolitical, with Germany's neighbors fed up with its failing energy diktat.

Given Germany's demographic and economic weight, this latest German misstep is proving to be yet another European catastrophe.

Drieu Godefridi is a jurist (University Saint-Louis, University of Louvain), philosopher (University Saint-Louis, University of Louvain) and PhD in legal theory (Paris IV-Sorbonne). He is an entrepreneur, CEO of a European private education group and director of PAN Medias Group. He is the author of The Green Reich (2020).

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\$17bn 'Project Sail' data center campus proposed in Atlanta, Georgia

832-acre site could house 13 data halls

January 02, 2025 By: Matthew Gooding  Have your say

A 13-building data center campus costing \$17 billion has been proposed for Atlanta, Georgia.

Known as Project Sail, the campus would be built on 832 acres of land near the city of Newnan, 45 miles south of Atlanta in Coweta County. The site is adjacent to Welcome Sargent Road and Wagers Mill Road.

Atlas Development LLC, the company behind the scheme, has submitted a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) **filing** to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, revealing details of the project.

Each of the data halls on the site will be 378,000 sq ft (35,117 sqm), giving it an overall footprint of 4.9 million sq ft (455,244 sqm). Details of IT capacity, or how the data center will be powered, are not included in the application, though the site appears to be close to the Plant Yates gas power station. Operated by Georgia Power, the plant is capable of producing 700MW.

The DRI filing says the project will cost \$17bn to build, and bring in tax revenue of \$1.6bn each year. Atlas

Development is asking for rezoning permission for the land, which is currently undeveloped.



The courthouse in Newnan, Georgia. The city could soon be home to a massive data center campus

– Jon Frederick/Getty Images

Details of Project Sail were first reported by [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#).

Little information about Atlas Development LLC is available online, with its website featuring only a holding page. According to Georgia state records, the company was incorporated in 2017. DCD has contacted Atlas for more information on the project.

Atlanta is becoming a major data center hub, with the likes of Digital Realty, CoreSite, Switch, Google, Microsoft, Flexential, H5, and QTS developing or operating data centers in the Atlanta area – largely around Lithia Springs or Douglasville.

Recent months have seen Stack file to build two data centers outside Atlanta, in addition to the site it already operates in the region.

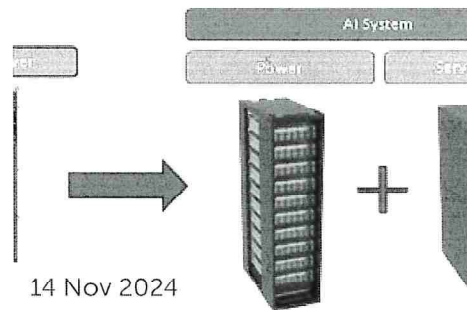
Elsewhere, [Steam](#) hopes to build a 240MW campus on a 1.3 million sq ft (13,870 sqm) site west of Atlanta in Douglas County.

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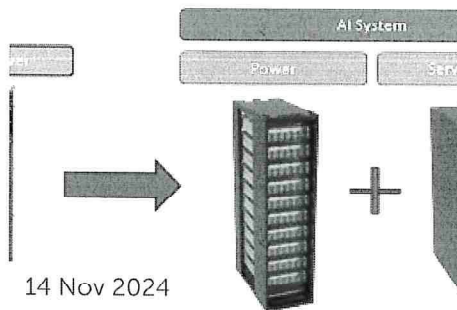
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POLITICS

Trump announces \$20 billion foreign investment to build new U.S. data centers

PUBLISHED TUE, JAN 7 2025-11:19 AM EST UPDATED 3 HOURS AGO



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KEY POINTS

President-elect Donald Trump announced a \$20 billion foreign investment to build new data centers in the United States.

Emirati billionaire Hussain Sajwani, a Trump associate and founder of the property development company DAMAC Properties, is pledging the money, Trump said.

KELLY EVANS BREAKS
DOWN THE
INTERSECTION OF
WASHINGTON AND
WALL STREET



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President-elect Trump announces \$20 billion foreign investment to build new U.S. data centers

President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday announced a \$20 billion foreign investment to build new data centers across the United States.

Emirati billionaire Hussain Sajwani, a Trump associate and founder of the property development company DAMAC Properties, is pledging “at least” that amount, the president-elect said at his Florida home, Mar-a-Lago.

“They may go double, or even somewhat more than double, that amount of money,” Trump said of Sajwani’s company.

The “first phase” of the plan will take place in Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana, Trump said. *Nebraska out!*

Sajwani suggested that the Republican’s election spurred him to commit to the investment.

“It’s been amazing news for me and my family when [Trump] was elected in November. We’ve been waiting four years to increase our investment in [the] U.S. to very large amounts of money,” the Dubai developer said in brief remarks at Mar-a-Lago.

Sajwani’s pledge is the latest example of a foreign business leader promising to spend big in the U.S. as a result of Trump’s election victory over Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris.

In December, Softbank CEO Masayoshi Son announced plans to invest \$100 billion in the U.S. and create 100,000 jobs over the course of Trump's four-year term.

Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20, has sought to attract more foreign entities to do business in the U.S. by offering perks, such as expedited permits, for those that invest \$1 billion or more.

TRENDING NOW



Howard Marks sees cautionary signs of bubble, says investors shouldn't ignore today's high valuation



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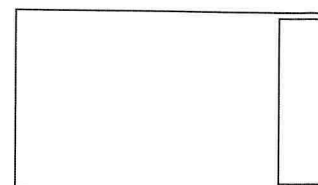
https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/business/25-billion-west-feliciana-data-center-approved/article_d6dce702-cc45-11ef-8ff0-1fd2550a45e5.html

\$2.5 billion West Feliciana data center approved with 'aggressive timeline to build'

BY TIMOTHY BOONE | Business editor

Jan 6, 2025

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A rendering of the \$2.5 billion data center West Feliciana Parish officials approved Monday. Hut 8 plans to build the data center on a 611-acre parcel off La. 964 on the southern end of the parish.

West Feliciana Parish officials approved a zoning change Monday evening that will allow for the construction of a \$2.5 billion data center.

The parish Planning & Zoning Commission easily voted in favor of the Hut 8 artificial intelligence data center. Parish President Kenny Havard said the center will create "several hundred" permanent jobs.

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Riley Trettel, senior vice president of data center development for Hut 8, said the plan is to lease the center to an undisclosed tenant, which will then buy computers and equipment. Trettel said Hut 8 serves as a developer for technology companies that need more computer infrastructure than they can build.

The tenants of the data center will purchase \$10 billion worth of computers and equipment, Havard said.

Hut 8 plans to build the data center on a 611-acre parcel off La. 964 on the southern end of the parish.

The first phase would consist of two 450,000-square-foot buildings that would house data servers and create thousands of direct and indirect construction jobs. More than 50 permanent jobs would be created for network and server technicians and maintenance staff. Plans are to complete the first building by the end of the year and the second before the end of 2026.

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"We have an aggressive timeline to build," Trettel said. "We plan to get started as expeditiously as we can."

Louisiana is a target market for Hut 8, Trettel said. There's a strong fiberoptic infrastructure along Interstate 10 and the property is close to River Bend. The site the company plans to build on is high above the 500 year flood plain and there's a robust work force.

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Future phases could triple the size of the operations and could lead to the construction of a power plant to meet the utility needs of the operation, Havard said.

Hut 8 operates Bitcoin mining facilities and data centers at 20 sites across the U.S. and Canada. The company is named after the building where pioneering computer scientist Alan Turing created the machines that cracked the Enigma code during World War II. This enabled the Allies to intercept messages from the Germans and caused U.S. and British forces to win battles.

Talk of a large-scale data center has been swirling around West Feliciana Parish for more than a year. In November 2023, Havard announced the parish had sold the 107-acre site in its industrial park for \$500,000 for a business that would be a tremendous boost for the local economy.

According to the documents submitted with West Feliciana officials, the first phases of the data center would require 300 megawatts of power.

That's enough energy to power 54,000 Southern homes for a year,

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according to estimates from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Future expansions could take the energy demands up to and beyond 1,000 megawatts.

The River Bend Station in St. Francisville generates 974 megawatts of power, according to Entergy.

Data centers are airport-sized buildings filled with computer servers and other IT infrastructure that serve as a facility for companies to store, process and send out data.

In addition to storage and cloud services, the powerful facilities can support things like AI machine learning, social media, large e-commerce purchases, real-time map services and even cryptocurrency mining.

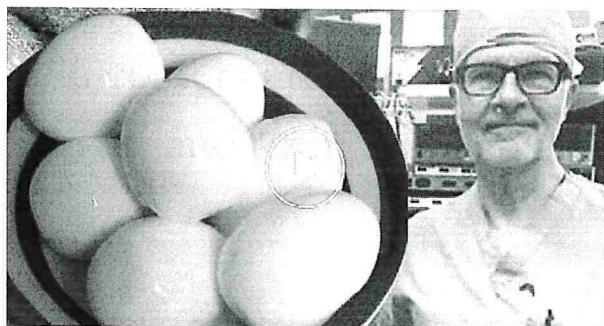
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Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Susan Bonnett Bourgeois has said the amount of available land and power grid capacity make the state an attractive location for data centers.

"Data centers are a great example of a blend between a blue-collar industry and tech," she said in an interview this fall.

Email Timothy Boone at tboone@theadvocate.com.

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26 MINUTES AGO

Kyle Backer

2,069-acre parcel will become a \$20 billion data center park in Buckeye

On Aug. 28, [Tract](#), a developer of master-planned data center parks, announced its acquisition of a 2,069-acre parcel in Buckeye for \$136 million. The company plans to transform the site into a \$20 billion data center park by building up to 20 million square feet of data center space across as many as 40 individual data centers at full build-out, which would make it one of the largest data center parks in the U.S.

MORE NEWS: [10 biggest commercial real estate deals in Arizona in 2024](#)

RELATED NEWS: [Anita Verma-Lallian: From big deals to film reels](#)

“This project represents a major milestone for Buckeye. Through our collaboration with Tract, we’ve positioned Buckeye to host one of the largest data center technology parks in the country, driving substantial revenue and ensuring a thriving, sustainable future. By identifying land near the airport, we replaced an outdated planned community with a decades-long plan for economic growth,” says Buckeye Mayor Eric Orsborn in a press release. “Projects of this size require a well thought out, executable plan especially when analyzing the infrastructure needs of communities and we are pleased that this project reduces water demand, preserves natural spaces and creates hundreds of high-paying jobs.”

Finding a contiguous site this large is rare, especially private land, according to Anita Verma-Lallian, founder and CEO of Arizona Land Consulting. That’s why she bought the land in February of 2022.

“It’s considered a mega site for a user who needs that scale of land, and it’s one of the few parcels that size still out there,” Verma-Lallian continues. “That’s what was attractive to us and to Tract. If you’re looking closer to Phoenix, even 100 acres is hard to find. Going further out from [the urban core] there are more sites from 200 to 500 acres, but above that, they’re pretty scarce. Sites that size with infrastructure are even more rare.”

Originally, the land was slated to be a master-planned residential community called Cipriani, but when Verma-Lallian purchased the parcel, she started looking at other options for it.

“We realized there wasn’t the water to carry out the original development agreement, so we started to look at the parcel from an industrial view, and fortunately, the City of Buckeye was on board with that,” she says. “They’re expanding the [Buckeye Municipal Airport] that’s just about a mile east of [the site], so the city felt like it was a compatible use with what they’re planning on doing with the airport.”

Suzie Boyles, economic development director for the City of Buckeye, adds that the long-term vision for the Buckeye Municipal Airport is for it to be a major economic engine for not only the city, but for the whole region.

“Removing residential zoning from [that 2,069-acre parcel] and replacing it with light industrial and commercial uses further advances the development of the airport,” she continues. “Currently, our airport is 700 acres and is used for general aviation. The city is working on plans to expand general aviation and bring corporate jets but also looking at military and cargo operations. That means land uses around the airport need to be complimentary, because you don’t want a residential home on the end of a runway. That is one of the reason the city was supportive of this particular amendment.”

Not only does Tract's plans for a data center park mesh well with the future growth of the Buckeye Municipal Airport, but it also reduces traffic and water demand when compared to using the land for a master-planned residential community. According to Boyles, Tract projects more than 360 jobs at full build out, which is a smaller number than a manufacturing facility from a job to land ratio, but she says the city sees these high-wage positions as being a benefit to the community.

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"In addition, the developer is making some significant investments in infrastructure, such as regional water facilities," Boyles says. "They're also making investments in two public safety facilities and street infrastructure, namely the Johnson Road interchange. Those are a lot of the reasons we supported this change in land use."

While Tract's current plan is to build data centers on the parcel, Boyles notes that there are pockets within the 2,069 acres that are reserved for traditional commercial development.

"Tract does have the flexibility to build other industrial products within the site, along with some retail and other commercial," she concludes. "I think this tech corridor shows that the Buckeye City Council is forward thinking, ensuring Buckeye remains a thriving and sustainable community."

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TOP STORY

Developers unveil plans for large tech data center in Louisville, the 1st of its kind in Kentucky

Marcus Green
Jan 16, 2025



The developers expect the data center will create hundreds of full-time jobs and employ perhaps up to 1,000 construction workers.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- Developers plan to transform more than 150 acres in Louisville into Kentucky's first large-scale data center, a project meant to handle massive amounts of data from cloud computing, artificial intelligence and other demands of an increasingly digital world.

The campus on Camp Ground Road just west of Shively will be under construction this year and in use by late 2026, according to Louisville real estate firm Poe Companies and Virginia-based PowerHouse Data Centers. Officials with the joint venture say they're in talks with a handful of well-known technology companies to occupy the site.

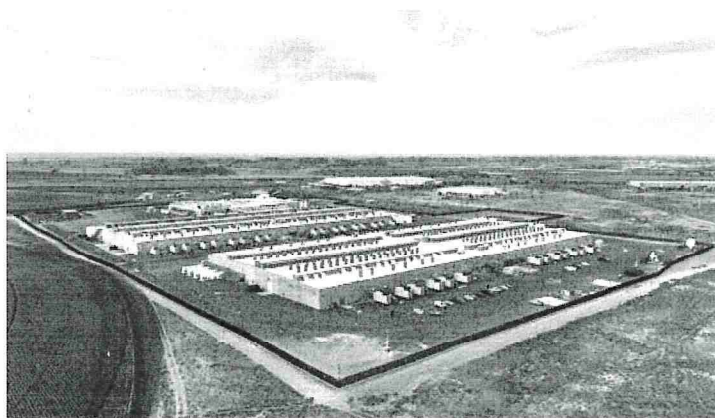
The group of prospective tenants includes "hyperscalers" — tech giants like Google, Amazon and Microsoft that need thousands of servers, routers, cables and other components in order to store and process troves of information streaming from cellphones, computers and other gadgets.

"Louisville is just a natural place to locate in the country," PowerHouse CEO Doug Fleit said.

The city is appealing because of tax incentives the Kentucky General Assembly approved last year for data center projects as well as ample electricity, water and fiber connections, he told WDRB News in an interview this week.

Poe Companies CEO Steve Poe called it a "transformative project."

While there are no formal projections, the developers expect the data center will create hundreds of full-time jobs and employ perhaps up to 1,000 construction workers along with millions of dollars annually in property and other tax revenue for local and state coffers.



Amazon Web Services data center is seen on Thursday, Aug. 22, 2024, in Boardman, Ore. (AP Photo/Jenny Kane)

Jenny Kane

Data center construction has boomed in parts of the U.S. in recent years, although not in Kentucky or southern Indiana. But that began to change after Facebook parent company Meta announced plans last year for an \$800 million project at the River Ridge Commerce Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

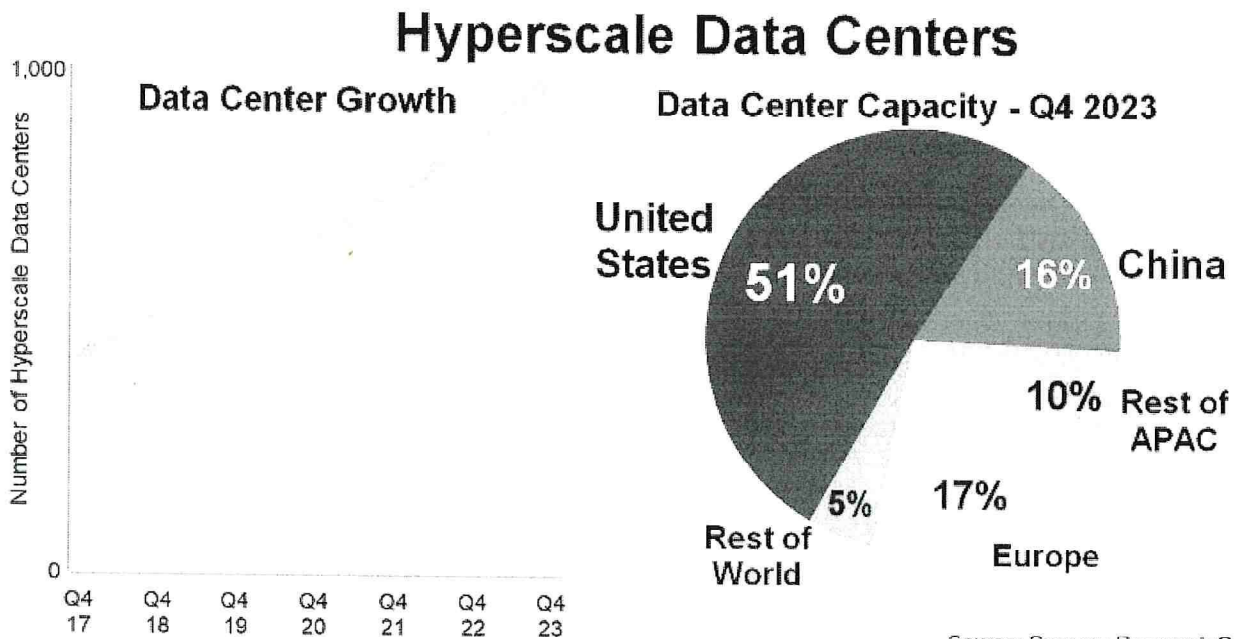
"Meta is a great bellwether, because when you look at Meta they are at all the important crossroads in this country," Fleit said.

PowerHouse, a division of American Real Estate Partners, lists nearly 60 data center buildings in its portfolio.

Analysts predict the number of large centers like the one planned for Louisville will double worldwide within the next four years. At the same time, some experts are touting the Kentucky region as a place to watch for future developments because of available land and power.

The Camp Ground Road site is just the first of what PowerHouse and Poe officials say will be additional large data centers they plan to develop in the region.

"Louisville is going to rapidly be an emerging market in data centers," Fleit said. "And you'll see this property be only one of several, which is why we want to grow this market."



Source: Synergy Research Group

The number of large data centers have been steadily increasing in recent years. Analysts predict up to 130 new 'hyperscale' centers will open each year in the foreseeable future. (source: Synergy Research Group)

Marcus Green

'Access to the power'

The Camp Ground Road property sprawls across 153 acres near the Rubbertown industrial district, less than 1 mile from the Ohio River. The immediate area includes businesses and a smattering of homes.

Poe Companies, whose work includes the Aloft and downtown Marriott hotels and numerous commercial, industrial and housing developments, assembled the land with plans for warehouse buildings before pursuing the data center project with PowerHouse.

"It was kind of a rare bird to begin with, to be able to put together over 100 acres of contiguous property within Jefferson County," said Hank Hillebrand, president of Poe Companies. He estimated the total investment in the project at "several billions of dollars."

A data center is allowed on the property under Metro land-use rules, meaning that a zoning change isn't needed, Hillebrand said. There likely would be five to eight two-story buildings — a "true campus," he said.

Data center operations require considerable amounts of power, making available electricity one of the biggest factors in choosing a site, Hillebrand said. The Camp Ground Road property is just northeast of Louisville Gas & Electric Co.'s Cane Run generation station.

"It morphed into this use really because of the access to the power," Hillebrand said. "You know, the LG&E lines run directly through the middle of the site, and that enabled us to cheaply develop for power."

The data center is expected to eventually use roughly 400 megawatts — enough to power about 400,000 homes per month. But that would happen gradually, with plans calling for the first amount -- 130 megawatts -- available by October 2026.

LG&E aims to build a transmission substation to carry high-voltage electricity from power lines to a station owned and paid for by the developers that will distribute energy to the buildings there. Like other infrastructure for large projects, the utility-owned substation would be paid for by its customers.

LG&E has evaluated the additional demand from the proposed data center, said John Bevington, senior director of economic development for PPL Corp., of which LG&E and Kentucky Utilities are subsidiaries.

"We've gone through formal transmission studies, which have to be done to make sure that a load coming on our system isn't going to negatively or in any way impact our existing customer base," he said.

In the short term, LG&E officials say the local power grid can support the proposed Louisville data center.

"For this project, we are in good shape," said Chris Whelan, LG&E's vice president of communications. But, she added, "additional data centers coming onto our system would require extra generation."

In forecasting future power needs, LG&E and Kentucky Utilities told regulators it's likely that data centers built in their service areas will require between 1,050 and 1,750 megawatts of electricity within the next decade.

Bevington estimated that his team is in discussions with about 16-20 data center proposals at any given time.

"The interest and the inquiries are coming in on a weekly basis," he said.

That interest picked up, he added, after a bill giving some data centers sales tax breaks cleared the Kentucky legislature last year.

"It really did open up the opportunity flood gates for us and a variety of other economic development entities across the state to be talking about and working with data center projects," Bevington said.

Besides power, data centers can require large amounts of water to keep their systems cool. Developers of the Louisville project say it will benefit from the nearby Ohio River and the Louisville Water Co.'s extra capacity.

Kelley Dearing Smith, the Water Co.'s vice president of communications and marketing, said the amount of water needed for the data center ultimately depends on the tenant.

"With a very large water user like this looking at this, we will have to do improvements — and we already have talked about improvements for this area," she said.

She said the goal is for a new water transmission main or other infrastructure that serves the data center also to connect to other users in the area, allowing the costs to be spread out.

"Whatever we put in that area will also benefit customers in the south end and Bullitt County and potentially into Hardin County as well," she said.

Legislation targets data centers

Bringing data center projects to Kentucky is "of paramount importance to the economic well-being of the Commonwealth," according to the legislation passed by state lawmakers. For now, those incentives apply just to certain projects in Louisville.

The new Kentucky law lets data centers that invest at least \$450 million in city limits avoid paying sales and related taxes for 50 years on computer equipment and other gear.

Meanwhile, firms that do site development work could get those tax exemptions for up to 15 years.

Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester, credited Jeff Noel, secretary of Gov. Andy Beshear's economic development cabinet, and Katie Smith, the agency's deputy secretary, with helping craft the legislation with lawmakers. He called the effort "a really good example of how the system can work."

While sales taxes won't be collected, Stivers said there will be a benefit in other taxes, from property taxes to occupational and income taxes for workers at the data center.

"You create such a substantial increase in property values — that helps a lot of different people," Stivers said, adding that Jefferson County Public Schools will "probably be the biggest beneficiary."

Attracting businesses in emerging tech industries is a plank in the economic development plan championed by Louisville's Mayor Craig Greenberg, a Democrat. In an interview, Greenberg said the data center project is forward-looking and helps raise the city's profile.

"It sends a signal that we are a great place for technology businesses of today and tomorrow to locate, that we are going to be a city where we support software engineers, coders, tech businesses, businesses that are driven by AI."

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NEWS

Meridian lands \$10 billion Compass Datacenters project, Gov. Reeves announces



Ross Reily

Mississippi Clarion Ledger

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Dallas-based Compass Datacenters, a multinational data center developer, is locating its next hyperscale data center campus in Meridian, according to Gov. Tate Reeves, who announced the project at the Mississippi Economic Council's Capital Day Thursday.

The campus will consist of eight data centers that will be constructed over an eight-year period. Upon occupancy, Compass Datacenters' campus will represent an investment of \$10 billion, including future tenants' information technology equipment. The campus also will create thousands of direct and indirect jobs. Compass Datacenters builds single-tenant, hyperscale data center campuses. The large-scale campuses built by Compass are designed to last for more than 100 years and create economies of scale to support local businesses and jobs.

The Amazon impact: Industry looks at MS differently after AWS announcement. What can follow?

Can Madison County hang on to Nissan? 2025 poses development opportunities, challenges

Mississippi Development Authority is providing assistance for site preparation. MDA also will certify Compass Datacenters as a data center operator, which will provide the company with 10-year state income and franchise tax exemptions, as well as a sales and use tax exemption on construction materials, equipment and software and hardware replacements.

The city of Meridian, Lauderdale County, and electrical utility provider Mississippi Power Company also are assisting with the project. Mississippi Power will supply approximately

500 megawatts of power to the facility.

Twice in two years

This is the second big data center announcement in Mississippi over the past two years.

Amazon Web Services will occupy two Madison County locations for a historic buildout for hyperscale development centers, and a leader in the industry has said Mississippi is on the right path for economic development.

Josh Levi previously told the Clarion Ledger the news for Mississippi is "terrific."

Levi is president of the Data Center Coalition, a membership association of leading data center owners and operators serving as the voice of the data center industry.

"The data that will be stored at those locations have become central to our daily lives," Levi said previously. "The way we work, the way we learn, shop, bank, access medical care is all online and data driven. Data centers are the folks that provide the infrastructure to keep us connected and provide efficiency."

What's in the future?

Josh Hendrickson, chair of the Department of Economics at the University of Mississippi, has previously told the Clarion Ledger that Mississippi has done a good job of being prepared for the future.

"Really, the whole point of AWS is that it's not about that one project," Hendrickson said. "The hope is that the one big project is one big magnet that attracts more projects in the future."

Hendrickson said he believes the true impacts could be seen in 5 to 10 years, but that the AWS announcement has the ball rolling.

"The first project sends the signal to other companies that might be looking for site selection," Hendrickson said. "What Mississippi has done definitely demonstrates it is a great location, but I think it might take a while for the overall impact. But that is why you do the big project up front."

Landing in Meridian

Compass Datacenters President and Chief Development Officer A.J. Byers believes the announcement is a game changer for Meridian, Lauderdale County and Mississippi, as a whole.

"We are looking forward to building our next campus in Meridian," Byers said. "We appreciate the time and effort Mississippi Development Authority, East Mississippi Business Development Corporation and Mississippi Power have invested with us to bring this project to fruition and look forward to bringing good-paying jobs and economic benefits to the region for decades to come."

Compass Datacenters has been named one of Inc. Magazine's 5,000 fastest growing companies. It designs and constructs data centers for some of the world's largest hyperscalers and cloud providers on campuses around the globe.

"Since meeting the Compass Datacenter folks in February 2024, it has been one exciting experience," said Bill Hannah, East Mississippi Business Development Corporation president, in a statement. "Mississippi Power's investment in a substation for the I-20/59 Industrial Park, along with Lauderdale County's ability to work with the Mississippi Legislature for a \$4 million site grant, an additional MDA site grant and the city of Meridian's water/sewer investment years ago, truly made this site a speed to market option for Compass."

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