

06JULY2026, 5 – 6: 30 pm

GFDA Fourth Data Center Task Force – presenter Betsey Hale, Cheynne LEADS

In person attendance: about 45

Zoom attendance: about 28

Intro from Jolene - GFDA is a nonprofit that works with businesses. Not a government agency. Recap of first three meetings.

Betsey Hale, CEO of [Cheynne LEADS](https://cheynneleads.org/) : <https://cheynneleads.org/>. Cheynne LEADS is an economic development organization in their 40th year.

Presentation slides are attached to these notes.

Cheyenne is on the intersection of I-80 and I-25. Cheynne is similar to Great Falls, recognized they needed to diversify into various industries for economic growth. Cheynne is home to F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

Started working with Microsoft in 2006 and first data center happened in 2012.

Wyoming's first Microsoft data center began construction in Cheynne in 2012, Cheynne LEADS has been at the forefront of data center recruitment. Today, Cheynne has 10 data centers operating, 5 under construction, and 9 in due diligence or planning. Cheynne LEADS manages construction of all site infrastructure on the business parks they manage.

Important to focus on business retention. Perspective is that data centers are positive for rural America, but communities don't have to accept every one that wants to locate in your region. Land use regulations and standards are the critical components of success.

Microsoft holds Azure Cloud. Cheynne also has NOAA. Cloud is the host for the military and ICBMs.

Data centers save money in operating costs in the climate in Wyoming. Wyoming is a net energy exporter. Seeing 20-30 years of growth in this industry sector.

Financial benefits: see slides. The rest of the state would like Cheynne to start sharing tax

revenue dollars.

Keeps the city budget stable. Wyoming is working hard to reduce residential property taxes.

Largest signal intersection in Cheyenne was paid for by Meta.

Key point: What benefits come at what cost? What is the net benefit?

Really wanted to understand what is happening with water.

Data Centers are required to come onto public water and sewer in Cheyenne. They are required to use closed loop systems. When closed loop is recharged every 5-6 years the circulant must be taken to a disposal site.

More water was used by the golf courses than by the 10 data centers.

Have an industrial pretreatment program, that prevents pollution from damaging treatment facilities or impacting the environment.

Sound/Noise

4 crypto mining facilities –Crypto was the first complaint about noise. No other data center had noise complaints. LEADS purchased a decibel meter so they can monitor.

Commercial Owners Associations are important – maintain open spaces, don't junk up the neighborhood, etc. Industrial park associations can self-police just like any other association.

Lighting

Lighting during construction phase has greater impact than during operations. Wildlife is a huge deal in Wyoming. Riparian areas, migration patterns. Built a road for antelope crossing fences.

LEADS is the complaint department if there is light casting, like when the wind blows. LEADS ensures they get addressed.

Environmental/Air Quality

Industrial sitings permit process with the state.

Wyoming DEQ makes everyone go through permitting processes.

Environmental Stewardship and wildlife—with Meta, purchased 900 acres had a very historic dairy barn with a slate wall, young men and women writing on the wall that left the farm over 100 year time period. Meta hired a historian and archaeologist to preserve the wall and move it into the data center.

Apparently cows love to watch data centers being built. Large sheep operation next to Meta site, that has worked out well with no adverse impacts.

Key for a community to have a community benefit agreement or development agreement.

Data Centers and Power Bills

2015 office of consumer advocacy and Black Hills Energy- Black Hills filed a large load tariff for large use customers. Data centers are located in BHE territory because of the large load tariff and protections to ratepayers.

Future/Long Term/Community Benefits

Every 3 – 5 years data centers reinvent themselves. They like to cluster and keep improving themselves.

Think about the future long term – about the future of the footprint of the building or just increasing the ability for the computing power. Pay fees, taxes, hiring more people.

Incredible trades jobs, companies invest a lot in training.

One company has 20 apprenticeships going for heating and cooling.

Colleges have trade programs going, creating the ability to go into a skilled trade right out of high school.

Meta gave out a bunch of community action grants, sponsor stomping out hunger program. Also sponsor weekend lunch bags that go home with school kids, meals on wheels. Microsoft matches philanthropic investments from employees.

The country leading in AI infrastructure and computing capacity will gain broad economic and military advantages.

The focus should be on responsible AI development and regulation, not on the data center building itself.

Wyoming is not an incentive rich state, the incentive is being in Wyoming. Wyoming is open for businesses.

Wyoming executive order – responsible data center development. Be responsible with oil and gas, fracking, etc.

Look at any type of industry out there – get to the table and talk about concerns.

Presentation ends at 5:58 pm.

Q&A

Q: What percentage of energy is clean energy like wind, solar, geothermal power data centers?

A: Right now, Enbridge building 900 MW solar field will be sold to Black Hills Energy. New NextEra wind farms going into production over the next several years with onsite storage. Renewables will come to forefront in next few years. 300 MW wind south of town being sold to Black Hills.

Q: Lifecycle for technology – planned, built, run stage. (lifecycle can be 3 stages). With data centers once they are built, they are a 20 year facility, technology is life cycled every 3-5 years. Data center jobs are managed remotely not locally (IT side). When they add servers, when they engineer servers, typically not local. Curious from your perspective, have you seen talent coming into the state or is it outsourced?

A: Microsoft team is local and NOAA is local. Jobs are 100 - 200 K + annual average salaries. Experience is mostly with Microsoft. Employees have come with the data centers and have stayed.

Q: Are you talking about facilities jobs or are you talking about operations/engineering jobs

in a command center? Operate more data centers – don't go with the centers, they are done remote. Have you been able to attract these types of jobs?

A: Employees have come and stayed here. 1,000 data center people that are in Wyoming that work in the data centers, not the management, but the actual servers.

A: Follow up from Betsey via email – The way Microsoft breaks down work in the data centers is as follows: regional roles with software engineers. They are not onsite jobs in Cheyenne.

Local roles: Logistics and IT support roles physically onsite in Cheyenne. These folks help receive hardware, deploy hardware, fix hardware, and ultimately decommission hardware. From an engineering perspective, we do have mechanical and electrical engineers onsite as well. These folks physically working out of the data centers in Cheyenne metro support critical environments that keep the data centers up and running.

Q: What keeps you up at night concerning data centers?

A: What keeps Betsey awake is that you want to do business with people who are in the data center business. Not real estate speculators, who buy land then resale to data centers. Know who you are doing business with. Know where the money goes, how it is flowing. There was a rush on land in Wyoming due to the large land tariff rate, 17 companies reached out, 14 of them were Chinese companies with direct ties to the PRC. Absolutely must know the business you are doing business with.

Q: Data centers use 2% of water in the area – then you referred to a closed loop system. Explain that further.

A: Older centers use evaporative cooling. New data centers use closed loop like system in car. Then recharge that system every 6 years. There are 10 campuses still on water evaporative cooling.

Q: 55-60 decibels of noise -what does that compare to?

A: Great question. Betsey doesn't know, she will find out.

A: Follow up from Betsey via email: 55 to 65 decibels is considered similar to your dishwasher or a vacuum running in a separate/adjacent room.

Q: Components in data centers need to be renewed every 3 – 5 years, what happens to those components? Recycle, waste, how are they processed?

A: Betsey doesn't know the exact recycling process. Betsey will find out.

A: Follow up from Betsey via email:

As servers are replaced overtime, some will get donated to Datacenter Academies for educational purposes/training and if not, they go to the circular center for proper disposal. The Microsoft Circular Center is a specialized facility that supports Microsoft's zero-waste and sustainability goals by processing decommissioned datacenter hardware and giving those components a second life instead of sending them directly to recycling or disposal.

When servers are retired from Microsoft Datacenters:

- Data-bearing devices are securely destroyed or processed to protect customer data.
- Usable components are harvested, tested, and refurbished for reuse in Microsoft's global cloud infrastructure.
- Remaining materials are recycled, resold, or repurposed through approved channels.

Microsoft has reused more than 3.2 million components since 2024 and has achieved a 90.9% reuse and recycling rate for servers and cloud hardware.

Q: What are your thoughts on the merger proposal with NorthWestern Energy and Black Hills Energy? Will it increase grid strain in Montana?

A: Black Hills committed to large load tariff. Can get infrastructure paid for and can sell to other entities. Look at the companies website, don't want to make too many comments on a merger between publicly traded companies.

Q: for Jolene – are there proposed data centers in Great Falls now?

A: There are no proposed data centers for Great Falls at this time. Vision Net is looking to upgrade chips/infrastructure.

Q: Is there a housing shortage issue in Cheyenne?

A: Companies are trying to figure out housing with appropriate locations and solutions. Maybe all workers don't live in Cheyenne, buses come from Greeley, CO. Work with

schedules, so everyone is not onsite at the same time.

Companies want to have beneficial standards. Maybe convert a mobile home park to an RV park. This is an important topic for hotels and lodging, long term stays can impact tourism use of hotels.

Q: Idea of having a special rate to pay for power plants and transmission other upgrades – what happens if something is half built and goes broke?

A: Don't issue debt, have the developer actually pay for it with dedicated funds. Black Hills then owns the infrastructure, and the cash outlay is a cost of doing business for data centers. Don't debt finance – set up escrow for sewer, water, roads, etc.

Q: Saw that a data center wastewater contaminated Cheyenne.

A: Meta was testing a closed loop system, the bacteria was a naturally occurring bacteria - glycol/sugar. The waste treatment water was caught in pretreatment. Had it been discharged into the "purple pipe" it would have gone into water. Preventative monitoring caught the problem. A disappointment, also a testament to the system working. Closed loop cannot be discharged, must be taken to a disposal site.

Q: Did you measure the water tables by the facility to see if it went down by having a large amount of land covered by buildings and asphalt?

A: No, we have not done that yet. New project being proposed, we will see if DEQ might do a study there.

Q: Is there a system that is designed to use water at 63F?

A: Looking at geothermal in other parts and where it worked.

Q: Studies on sheep or cows or people around the facility?

A: No demonstrated impacts in Cheyenne. Most people didn't even realize that there were data centers in the business parks. Ranch adjacent to Microsoft and NOAA. Owners of ranch (cattle ranch) have not expressed concerns with livestock.

Q: Is there an exit plan for data centers?

A: Community benefits agreement some kind of reclamation bond or decommissioning

plan. Haven't seen sites decommission yet. Make a plan with board of public utilities and sewer and water.

Q: Any data centers built on a dump to use methane gas?

A: Not yet. But someone would like to explore it. Great question.

Q: Space X is thinking of putting modules in space – what happens to facilities on earth.

A: Plenty of empty buildings on earth with nothing to do with data centers. Economic Developers work to keep buildings full. Come into an area as Coca Cola then 20 to 30 years later have to find a use for the building – use or buy/sell. Economic Developers take real estate and re use classes. Not every company is going to be everywhere forever. Russel Stover closed a large candy facility in Kansas, what do we do with these old candy facilities? Meat processing plants are the same question. Can't answer as data center centric – think about constantly reinventing assets, particularly in business parks. We want those to be an evergreen campus for generations, focusing on the bigger picture.



Cheyenne **LEADS**

The Cheyenne-Laramie County Corporation for Economic Development



July 2026

Betsey Hale, CEcD – CEO Cheyenne LEADS



Cheyenne **LEADS**

The Cheyenne-Laramie County Corporation for Economic Development



Economic Development organization for Cheyenne & Laramie County

Contract with the City and County to do economic development

Membership organization

Work with companies looking to move to the community

Work with companies wanting to expand and grow in the community

We own two business parks, and manage a couple of others

Manage offsite Improvements

Job creation / Business Retention / Economic Fortification / Tax Revenue / Quality of Life

Data Center in Cheyenne/Laramie County

By the Numbers:

Data centers are identified by location rather than building count, power use, or water consumption because a single data center campus may include one large building or several smaller buildings. Location-based identification is the only consistent way to accurately answer how many data centers exist.

Active
Data Centers

10

Data Centers
Under Construction

5

Data Centers going
through the planning
process

9

<https://cheyenneleads.org/why-cheyenne/data-centers/>

Why Data Centers are Choosing Cheyenne

Data centers choose Cheyenne for its unique combination of cool climate, abundant energy, favorable tax laws, geologic and geographic stability.

Ideal Climate: Cheyenne's high-elevation, cool climate allows facilities to use outside air for cooling most of the year. This slashes energy and water consumption and lowers operating costs.

Energy Access & Cost: As a major energy producer, Wyoming offers abundant electricity, and has established tariffs that ensure large power users pay for their own infrastructure, protecting local ratepayers.

Fiber Connectivity: Cheyenne sits on a major transcontinental fiber optic "internet superhighway," ensuring excellent latency and redundant connectivity.

Low Natural Disaster Risk: The region faces a negligible risk of earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, or floods, making it highly secure for mission-critical operations

Who is benefiting from data centers?



- ✓ Residents (City, County and State)
- ✓ Workers
- ✓ Businesses
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Local Government
- ✓ State Government
- ✓ Community Organizations
- ✓ Future Generations

Data Centers Create:

A stronger, more diversified economy | More employment opportunities | Increased community investment
Long-term economic stability | Greater opportunities for future generations

Financial Benefits

TOTAL ECONOMIC INVESTMENT (publicly available information): \$3,270,644,819

Tax on Power is not included in this number, but estimated at approximately \$27,000,000

DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS: \$3,192,193,403

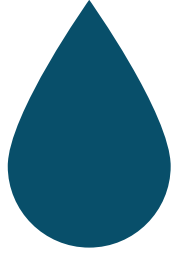
- ✓ Capital Investment: \$3,139,287,785
- ✓ Real Property Taxes Paid: \$10,367,088
- ✓ Permitting and Development Fees: \$42,538,529

OFF SITE IMPROVEMENTS: \$87,452,415

Earthwork	Roads
Stormwater	Traffic signal
Water infrastructure	Pedestrian pathway
Sewer	



But at What Cost...

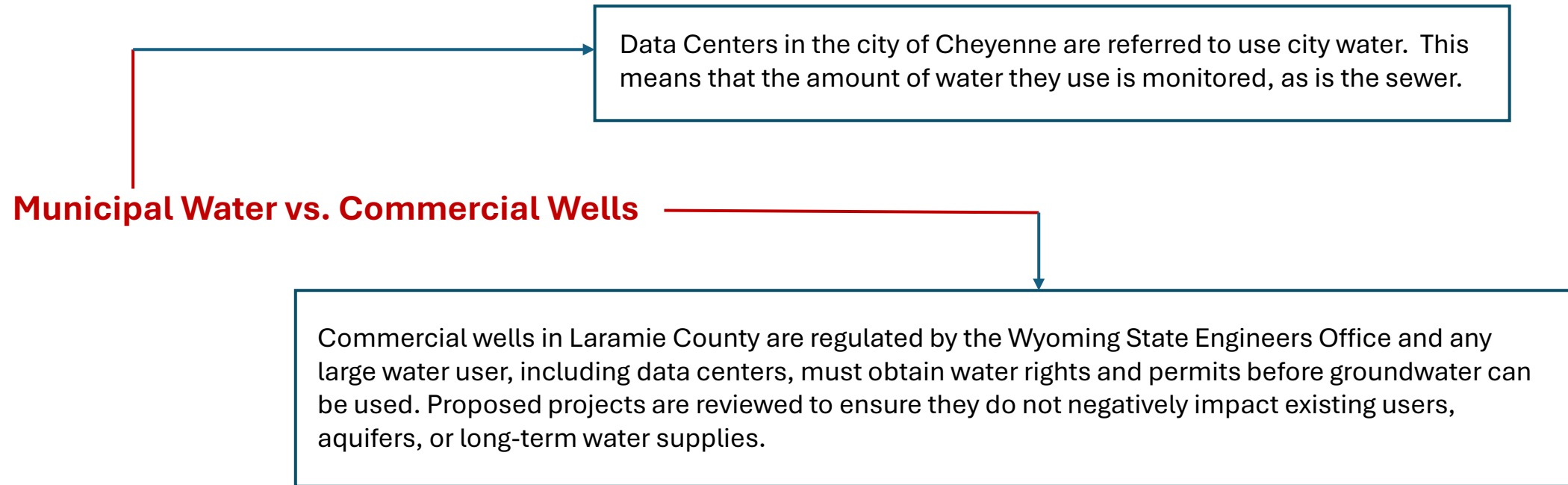


Water

Modern data centers are engineered for efficiency and do not require large amounts of water.

Closed Loop System - Most facilities utilize advanced cooling technologies to minimize resource use, ensuring sustainability. Data centers continue to improve technology and prioritize environmental sustainability, leading to significantly lower water usage

Only 2.2% of water delivered to customers by BOPU went to data centers



Sewer/Discharge

Industrial Pretreatment Program

- BOPU reviews industrial wastewater before it enters the sewer system.
- Prevents pollutants from damaging treatment facilities or impacting the environment.
- Ensures compliance with EPA regulations.



Sound/Noise

Modern data centers are designed with noise mitigation in mind and must comply with local noise regulations.

City Noise Ordinance

In Cheyenne, an ordinance addressing data center sound levels from August 2025 **limits sound levels to 60 decibels during the day and 55 decibels at night at the property line** (about the level of normal conversation or background office noise).

Low Frequency Noise

Research on low-frequency noise and infrasound is ongoing, as a result there isn't enough sound evidence on the topic. What we do know is that data center companies continue to advance technology & research to reduce all noise associated with their centers.



Lighting

Data centers are designed to minimize light pollution and reduce impacts on surrounding properties and wildlife. Facilities use requested to use downward-facing LED lighting, motion sensors, shielding, and dark-sky compliant fixtures that direct light only where needed rather than allowing it to spill into nearby neighborhoods or the night sky.

During Construction

Lighting impacts are typically greater during construction as projects require temporary work lights, extended work hours, and illuminated equipment for safety reasons.

Once a data center is completed, lighting is more controlled and limited primarily for security and operational needs.



Environmental/Air Quality

Even when located in a business or industrial park, data centers in Cheyenne and Laramie County must comply with local, state, and federal environmental regulations. This includes obtaining permits through the [Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality \(DEQ\)](#) for backup generators, fuel storage, air emissions, stormwater management, and other operational systems.

Facilities are required to meet [strict air quality standards](#), complete environmental reviews, and participate in ongoing monitoring and inspections to ensure compliance.

Public notice and comment periods are often part of the permitting process, providing transparency and opportunities for community input before permits are approved.



Environmental Stewardship and Wildlife

- **Environmental impacts are evaluated before development begins.** Studies may include wildlife, protected species, wetlands, stormwater, drainage, and land use.
- Projects must comply with local, state, and federal environmental regulations.
- Sites are designed to minimize impacts through natural buffers, landscaping, berms, and responsible lighting.
- Once operating, data centers typically have low traffic, low emissions, and minimal outdoor activity compared to many industrial facilities.



Data Centers and Your Power Bill

Data Centers in Wyoming Do Not Increase power bills (In Wyoming)

Ratepayers Are Protected

- BHE's **Large Load Tariff** prevents data center costs from being passed on to residential and small business customers.
- Data centers pay for the infrastructure needed to serve their projects.
- Large-load customers are required to provide customer-owned backup generation.

Data Centers Fund Infrastructure

- Developers pay for transmission, substations, and other electric system improvements required to serve their facilities.

Wyoming Has Room to Grow

- Wyoming exports more than 60% of the electricity it generates.
- BHE is planning decades ahead to ensure reliable power for future residential, commercial, and industrial growth.



BONUS: Grid Improvements
create reliability for all users

Workforce

During Construction

- Creates high-paying skilled trades jobs.
- Microsoft has supported **14+ years of continuous construction** in Cheyenne.
- Local contractors and workers are hired whenever possible.
- Construction workers support hotels, restaurants, retailers, and other local businesses.

Jobs include: Electricians, equipment operators, skilled trades, contractors, infrastructure crews, security, food service and janitorial.

Long Term - permanent

- Creates long-term careers in technology and facility operations.
- Provides stable jobs with training and advancement opportunities.
- Supports ongoing business for local contractors, suppliers, hotels, and restaurants.

Jobs include: Data Center Technicians IT & Network Engineers Electrical & Mechanical Technicians HVAC & Cooling Specialists Security Professionals Facilities & Operations Managers Logistics & Supply Chain

K-12 Partnerships

Workforce Development

LCSD1 Trades Academy connects students with careers in skilled trades.

Meta partnered with LCSD1 in 2026 to expand workforce training opportunities.

Students gain hands-on experience through internships, pre-apprenticeships, job shadowing, and dual-credit programs.

Prepares students for careers in construction, technology, infrastructure, manufacturing, and other skilled trades.

STEM & STEAM Education

Meta's Community Action Grants provide funding for STEM and STEAM education.

Grants support schools and community organizations with technology-focused learning opportunities.

Cheyenne became eligible for the program in 2026, expanding local educational resources and career pathways.

Education/Upskilling Opportunities



Programs at LCCC

Microsoft partnered with Laramie County Community College to create the [Datacenter Specialist Program](#), helping train students for careers in server operations, networking, cybersecurity, and IT support.

*“Data centers have been strong partners and have delivered real, measurable impact for LCCC and our students - **investing more than \$300,000 in scholarships, equipment, and program support, and directly or indirectly employing 80+ LCCC IT alumni.**”*

- Dr. Joe Schaffer, President Laramie County Community College

Meta’s American Workforce Academy

[America’s Workforce Academy \(AWA\)](#) is a nationwide, unprecedented fast-track to a long-term career in a skilled trade.

Microsoft TechSpark

Microsoft has invested millions of dollars in workforce development, education, and nonprofit partnerships in Cheyenne through programs like [Microsoft TechSpark](#)

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Data center project provide opportunities for [Wyoming Department of Workforce Services](#) to expand [apprenticeship](#), skilled trades, and technical workforce training programs tied to construction and long-term operations careers.

Philanthropic

Data center companies are long-term community partners—investing in education, workforce development, nonprofits, and programs that improve quality of life.



Meta's Data Center Community Action Grants Provides direct funding to local nonprofits and educational partners for projects that: Put technology to use for community benefit, Enable people to build strong, sustainable communities, Improve STEAM education

Microsoft has invested millions of dollars in Cheyenne-area nonprofits, workforce development, education, and community programs through initiatives like Microsoft TechSpark.

Since 2018, Microsoft has supported 56 community projects and donated approximately \$4.7 million to local organizations, including \$500,000 to Boys & Girls Club of Cheyenne.

Related Digital - \$3.5 million for housing

Why Data Centers Matter to U.S. Security & Military

- Data centers support U.S. military communications and intelligence.
- They power cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and critical infrastructure.
- They help protect energy, transportation, and financial systems.
- Data centers strengthen America's national security, military readiness, and global competitiveness.

Surveillance and AI Technology

Is China really a threat if the U.S. already has more data centers?

The issue isn't the number of data centers—it's computing capacity.

The U.S. must continue investing in AI, cybersecurity, and computing infrastructure to remain competitive and secure

Are data centers “surveillance centers?”

No. Data centers are infrastructure that store and process data, much like power plants provide electricity.

Privacy depends on how data is collected and used—not the data center itself.

AI can be used for many purposes, including healthcare, fraud prevention, weather forecasting, and national defense.

The focus should be on responsible AI development and regulation, not on the data center building itself.

!!! The country leading in AI infrastructure and computing capacity will gain broad economic and military advantages.



Public Money/Incentives

Compared with many states, Wyoming offers relatively few direct incentives to data centers. There are no cash grants, no free land, and no local tax abatements for projects

Managed Data Center Cost Reduction Grant can provide up to ~\$2.25 million over a three-year period to reimburse electricity and broadband costs for data centers based on investment and taxable capital investment.

Sales Tax & Use Tax Exemption on computer equipment and software, etc. for data centers that meet investment thresholds.

38 states offer sales & use tax exemption

14 of those states extend that exemption to electricity – Wyoming does not

16 states offer investment tax credits – Wyoming does not

15 offer property tax abatements – Wyoming does not

14 offer withholding tax credits – Wyoming does not

13 offer job creation credits – Wyoming does not

Data Centers the Wyoming Way

Governor Gordon - Executive Order 2026-03, "Data Centers the Wyoming Way"

Encourages responsible data center development while establishing principles to protect Wyoming communities and resources.

The Executive Order emphasizes:

- Protecting **residential and small business ratepayers** from bearing costs associated with large power users.
- Requiring **data centers to pay for the infrastructure** needed to serve their power demand.
- Encouraging **water conservation** and innovative cooling technologies.
- Protecting **wildlife and natural resources**.
- Promoting **workforce development** and Wyoming jobs.
- Encouraging **community engagement and transparency**.
- Recognizing data centers as important to **national security** and America's AI competitiveness.

QUESTIONS

**Cheyenne LEADS
Data Center page:**

