



MYTH: Data centers won't impact the water in your home.

FACT: Nearly all data centers require huge amounts of potable drinking water to function and cool their machines. They contaminate water and can lower water pressure. Data centers would compete with agriculture, tourism, and residents for our limited water. A new 16" water main is being built into the industrial park where data centers are proposed. This could transport millions of gallons of water daily.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Penn State Institute of Energy and the Environment. "Why AI uses so much energy—and what we can do about it"
<https://iee.psu.edu/news/blog/why-ai-uses-so-much-energy-and-what-we-can-do-about-it>

Honor the Earth. "Proposed Data Centers in Indian Country"
www.honorearth.org/datacentertracker

Montana Environmental Information Center. "Data Centers: Summary of Rising Demand"
<https://meic.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/1010-Data-Center-Load-Growth-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Lincoln Institute. "Why Tax Increment Financing Often Fails and How Communities Can Do Better"
www.lincolninst.edu/publications/articles/why-tax-increment-financing-often-fails-how-communities-can-do-better/

South Dakota News Watch. "What to know about the Black Hills Corp. and NorthWestern Energy merger"
www.sdnewswatch.org/black-hills-corp-northwestern-energy-merger/

**THANKS TO HONOR THE EARTH
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO
THIS FACT SHEET.**

DATA CENTERS



A current proposal could lead to two data centers (Artificial Intelligence or "AI" processing facilities) in the industrial park in southeast Rapid City along Highway 79.

Proposals for data centers are popping up all over the U.S. and are being resisted by local communities.

Every major tech company, including Amazon, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Apple and Open AI (ChatGPT), is racing to build massive multi-billion dollar data centers to support the immense processing needs from AI and cryptocurrency. Data centers would operate at the cost of our water, health, land, and electricity bills.



MYTH: Data centers are good for the economy.

FACT: Quite the opposite. Data centers employ few people. But they use a lot of electricity, straining the electrical grid and causing higher energy bills. The data centers proposed for Rapid City would use at least as much electricity as 14% of the households in the City.

MYTH: Data centers are good for rural areas.

FACT: Companies try to put data centers where they think people won't be able to oppose them, like low-income areas, tribal communities, and rural areas. Data centers have a large footprint and displace open land and animal habitats.



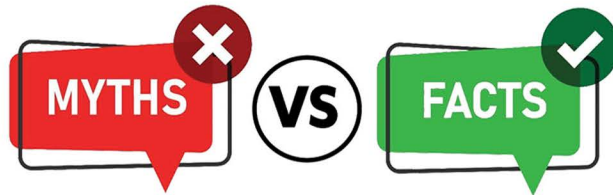
(Getty Images)

MYTH: Data centers are safe for our health.

FACT: Data centers operate 24/7/365. They emit up to 97 decibels of sound pollution, enough to cause permanent hearing loss for people who work or live nearby. People living near data centers report that the light they emit can easily be seen for miles. This disrupts sleep. Data centers generate lots of electronic waste and pollute the air.

MYTH: Our City and County officials will protect us from the problems associated with data centers.

FACT: Our Rapid City Council approved a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) for the industrial park where the data centers are proposed. This helps fund industrial park facilities, while potentially putting taxpayers on the hook if projects fail. Our Pennington County Commission turned down a request for a moratorium on data centers, which was requested by County Planning and Zoning officials.



MYTH: Data centers protect your privacy.

FACT: Data centers entrench the surveillance state. Every private conversation you share with ChatGPT is recorded forever. Centralizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) equipment in data centers makes them prime targets for cyberattacks or disasters.

MYTH: Local utilities can meet the energy demands of data centers.

FACT: Data centers lead to higher consumer electricity bills. Our main electrical utility is Black Hills Energy, which is growing to include North-Western Energy. NorthWestern serves Montana, Nebraska, and South Dakota. In Montana, six data centers are proposed -- this would quadruple NorthWestern's electricity demand in that state. What's more, NorthWestern says it doesn't have any more electricity to provide. Are we going to foot the bill for new coal or uranium mining or for construction of new power plants?

MYTH: We can't stop data centers from being built in Rapid City.

FACT: Companies try to slip data centers in quietly, since there is often public opposition. According to Data Center Watch, \$64 billion in U.S. data center projects have been blocked or delayed by a growing wave of local, bipartisan opposition.



Farrah Anderson / WFYI



Building data centers in Rapid City risks overloading local water resources, driving up electricity costs, fueling inequality, threatening our privacy, and leaving taxpayers with the costs while corporations capture the benefits.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Take action today!
The plans for the data centers are moving forward quickly.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance:
bhcleanwateralliance.org/contact/

City of Rapid City Council and Mayor:
www.rcgov.org/departments/mayor-s-office-city-council/city-council.html.

Ask them to reconsider the TIF for the Black Hills Industrial Center, which facilitates the construction of data centers.

Pennington County Commissioners:
https://pennco.org/boc_contactus

Ask them to reconsider and pass a moratorium on data centers.



www.bhcleanwateralliance.org