

Moris Media & Consulting: Data centers in the driftless - a community conversation

Posted on Friday, Feb 27, 2026

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

POTOSI, Wis. - Citizens and taxpayers from across SW Wisconsin have asked for a public meeting to discuss potential risks and rewards of data centers being developed in our area. Volunteer organizers have secured the Holiday Gardens Event Center in Potosi to host this community conversation on Sunday, March 8.

The event will be headlined by Prescott Balch, a recently retired technology executive from Caledonia, Wisc. who has traveled across Wisconsin and the Midwest to help educate communities about the rapid proliferation of data centers. Mr. Balch is well versed in a variety of topics surrounding data centers, including tax implications, water usage and utility rate impacts, as well as short and long-term job creation. He has also done extensive research on other economic and environmental considerations surrounding these projects.

“The national debate over data centers has arrived at our doorstep in the Driftless Region,” said Pete Moris, a Mt. Hope native who is one of the volunteer organizers of the Potosi event. “We are incredibly grateful that Prescott Balch and others have agreed to make the trip to Grant County to share their expertise. In addition to a formal presentation, there will be ample time devoted to answering questions from those in attendance.”

The Cassville area has been publicly mentioned as a potential site for a data center in Grant County. Given its location along the Cardinal-Hickory Transmission Line, its proximity to existing substations and a high-voltage electrical transmission line that runs north to Genoa, Wisc., as well as fiber optic connectivity, the area has much of the infrastructure in place that a data center would require.

“I’m an outdoor advocate who believes this kind of ecological devastation is immoral,” said local volunteer Melodie Betts. “Our farmland is disappearing at an alarming rate, and the Driftless Area needs to be preserved for generations to come.”

“Our goal is to provide basic facts and answer questions so community leaders and residents can make educated decisions,” Moris continued. “With little or virtually no regulation in place specific to data centers, it’s critical that we understand the potential long-term implications before any agreements are executed.

“Multiple states have already adopted moratoriums on new data center construction and similar state legislation has recently been introduced in Wisconsin. At a time when even the City of Madison has adopted a one-year pause on data centers, many residents of the Driftless Region have suggested that our local governments enact similar measures to ensure we’ve had ample time to pass adequate safeguards in place for our communities and our natural resources.”

Informational handouts will be available at the event. A cash bar will be open at the venue, with complimentary snacks and desserts provided. Members of the media are cordially invited to attend.