

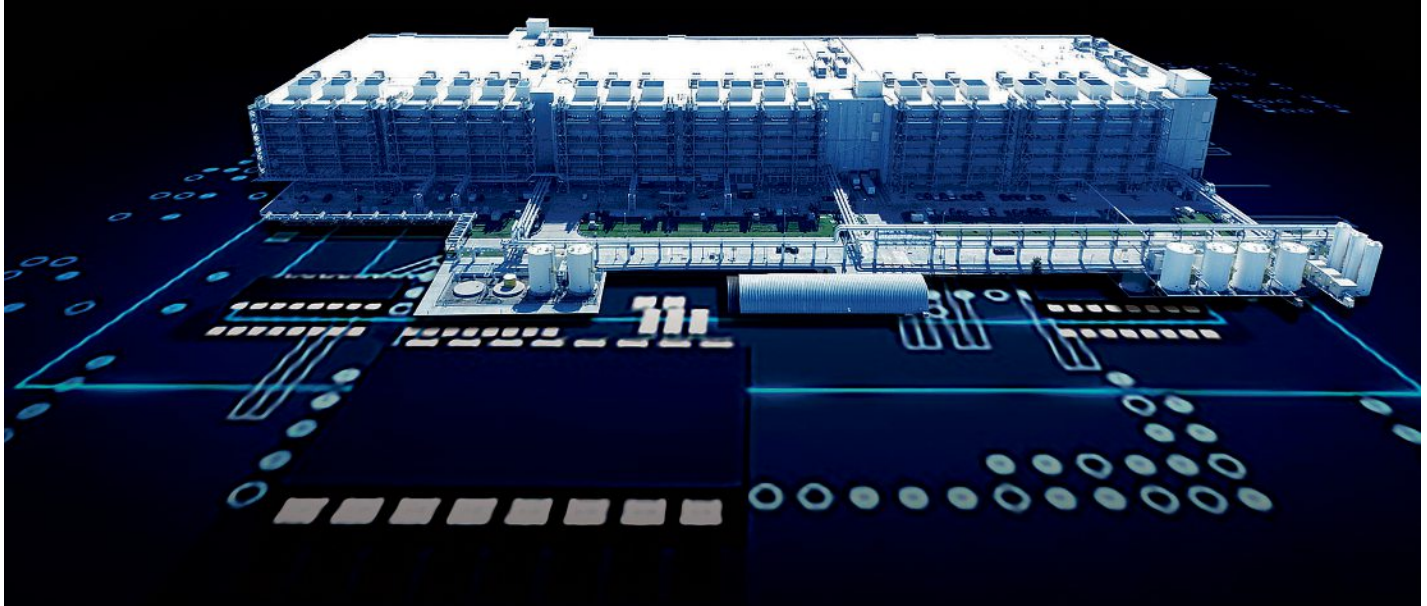
Evansville COURIER & PRESS weekend

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DATA CENTERS: BENEFITS & BURDENS

PROCESSING THE IMPACT



20 years in, how data centers changed one town's economy



Byron McCauley
Columnist
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa –

When the folks from Big Data eye your town for a hyperscale data center, read their lips when they start talking impact, numbers and benefits.

• Nearly two decades ago, Council Bluffs made a starter deal with Google: tax advantages in exchange for economic investment in the form of 200 permanent, good-paying jobs and millions in tax revenue. In 2007, Google announced an initial $600 million hyperscale data center on the site of the city's only remaining drive-in movie theater that had operated since 1950. The original building was 100,000 square feet when it opened. **See DATA CENTERS, Page 2A**

More online

Scan the QR code for the full three-part series, videos, photos, polls, previous coverage and more about the impact of data centers on local communities.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY REESE STRICKLAND, GRAPHIC BY GETTYIMAGES AND ROBIN FERGUSON

Indiana's neighbors are making money off marijuana

Jon Webb
Evansville Courier & Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Indiana lawmakers aren't likely to legalize recreational or medical marijuana anytime soon. But, in the next few years, there could be a way to get it done.

In a recent interview with the Courier & Press, incoming secretary of state Beau Bayh said he supports changing state law to allow ballot initiatives: a system in which residents can collect enough signatures to put important issues up for a vote and let everyday people, not legislators, have the final say.

He listed mid-decade redistricting as a potential candidate. And when asked, he said the marijuana issue could be decided the same way.

"I support putting that on the ballot and letting people decide," he said. "I think people are capable of making that big decision."

Multiple states have legalized marijuana that way. But anyone in Indiana ready to cast a cannabis ballot one way or another will have to wait. Enacting ballot initiatives would require a change to the Indiana constitution, which is an excruciatingly slow process.

First a bill would have to pass the general assembly – a difficult task on its own. Then the measure would need to be ratified in two successive legislative sessions, meaning it would take multiple years for the change to conceivably take hold.

Meanwhile, Indiana is missing out on hundreds of millions of dollars in potential revenue. Three of its neighbors – Illinois, Ohio and Michigan – have ratified recreational cannabis. And Kentucky legalized medical marijuana sales last year.

Here's how much money they're making in legalized, adult-use states.

Illinois

Illinois recorded $119 million in adult-use, or recreational, sales in September, the last month in which data is available. That was a slight dip from August and July, when it raked in $123 million and $126 million, respectively.

September's medical marijuana sales, meanwhile, hit $13 million.

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