


South Bend Tribune WEEKEND

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2026 | SOUTHBENDTRIBUNE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK




## 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 5A**

**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

# Groups push back against coal ash program

## State-led initiative draws concern from environmentalists

**Karl Schneider**
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Hoosiers have been voicing concerns about a plan to have Indiana take over a federal coal ash program in a move that state officials say will provide consistent oversight of waste from coal-burning power plants.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Sept. 15 proposed approving the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's application for a state-run permitting program.

At first, pushback was minimal but as the potential handover has drawn closer, more people are speaking out against the switch.

At a November 12 public hearing, representatives from environmental advocacy groups said the program would have negative effects on Hoosier health and Indiana's water.

Coal combustion residuals, commonly called coal ash or CCR, contain pollutants such as arsenic, chromium, lead, mercury and other heavy metals linked to cancer, heart disease and reproductive failure.

These hazardous substances can contaminate groundwater and blow around in the air as dust if utilities do not properly dispose of them.

Indiana has been working since 2021 to create the framework for its own coal ash permitting program and finalized its application in June 2026.

The program, if the EPA grants final approval, will house 13 new IDEM employees and will be funded through the permits it issues.

The EPA is expected to make a decision by March 2027.

### Hoosiers concerned over Indiana coal ash program

Environmental advocacy groups in Indiana spoke at the hearing, saying they opposed the state taking over the federal coal ash program as Indiana regulations are less protective of public health and the environment than

**See PROGRAM, Page 2A**




LICENSED MEMORY CARE

SPAGHETTI DINNER DRIVE-THRU FOR A CAUSE!

*Prepared by our North Woods Village Dining Staff with Love*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3 AT 4:30PM-6PM

Support the Alzheimer's Association with a delicious meal! For a $15 donation, enjoy homemade spaghetti, meatballs, and garlic toast from North Woods Village. 100% of proceeds fund the search for a cure. **RSVP IS REQUIRED** by November 30th. 574-247-1866

1409 E. Day Road, Mishawaka, IN 46545 · NorthWoodsMemoryCare.com

**Get the latest news, sports and more**

See today's top headlines, local breaking news, area scores, things to do and subscriber exclusives at southbendtribune.com.

**Subscriber-only eNewspaper**

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by scanning this code on your mobile devise, or go to southbendtribune.com/enewspaper.

Volume 154 | No. 218
To subscribe:
800-220-7378
©2026
$4.49

6 37606 10100 0