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HAZLE TWP.

PLANNERS RECOMMEND DATA CENTER RULES



Area residents look on and listen during a public hearing on proposed zoning regulations for data centers and battery energy storage systems held by the Hazle Twp. Planning Department at the Hazleton Area High School on Thursday. **JOHN HAEGER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

HEATING OIL

RESIDENTS FEEL THE PAIN OF RISING COSTS

LIHEAP assistance application process opens on Nov. 2

By Gregory Adams
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Sandy Dickison of Old Forge has had oil heat in her home for the past 20 years and would typically pay around \$2.50 to \$3.75 per gallon.

Her last oil delivery was Sept. 18 and it cost \$1,565 to fill her 275-gallon tank, at \$5.69 per gallon.

“We usually fill up our tank four times a year,” Dickison said. “It also heats our water, so we need it year-round. That would be approximately 1,100 gallons. At the current rate, that is \$6,259.”

Dickison added she and her family have been cutting back on some luxuries such as shopping and going out to eat as the heating oil prices carve out more of their household budget than she would like.

Heating oil prices have reached an all-time high, rising more than 85% from the same period last year, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports. The average cost of a gallon of heating oil in late October 2026 is

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ELECTION 2026

Vote GOP, or else: How Trump is dangling gov’t help on the campaign trail

By Seung Min Kim
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says Georgia GOP Senate candidate Mike Collins can call him whenever he wants to ask for help for his state. But if Georgia reelects Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff, Trump says it could be another story.

“There’s a big difference between that and Pee-wee Herman calling,” Trump said last week in Perry, Georgia, using his derisive

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Residents caution that regulations are ‘not ready for prime time’

By Kent Jackson
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HAZLE TWP. — Residents cautioned that new rules for data centers might have legal flaws, fail to protect homeowners and were “not ready for prime time,” but the township planning department recommended approving them with revisions.

After listening to 150 minutes of negative comments during a special meeting on Oct. 29 at Hazleton Area High School, the planners caucused for 30 minutes and then unanimously voted to send the rules to the supervisors, who have final authority to enact them.

When forwarding the rules contained in a curative amendment to the zoning ordinance, the planners added recommendations that they heard from the audience. Those include limiting how long diesel generators can run, requiring separate review if modular nuclear reactors are proposed, adding safeguards against the fire risk posed by lithium ion batteries and enabling the township to hire experts to review studies.

Residents, however, said an update of the amendment on Oct. 26 was weaker than a version proposed on Oct. 19.

The latest draft allowed data centers as a use by right, not a use that required special exception approval from the zoning board. A map posted with the amendment on the township’s showed an area east of Interstate 81, north of Route 924 and within a half mile of high-voltage lines where the township would allow data centers.



Jack Dean makes a point about proposed data center rules during a meeting of Hazle Twp. Planning Department at Hazleton Area High School auditorium on Thursday. **KENT JACKSON / STAFF PHOTO**

That designated area “appears tailored for one property,” a reference to land purchased by NorthPoint to create a 15-building data center on 1,345 acres called Project Hazelnut, Jack Dean, an attorney representing some of the homeowners in Eagle Rock Resort who live closest to the designated area, said.

Inconsistencies in the amendment make it possible that developers could build a data center anywhere in an I-1

industrial district, not just the designated area, Dean said.

Ginny Kerslake, who has traveled to data center meetings across Eastern Pennsylvania on behalf of Food and Water Watch, cautioned against reducing the distance between data centers and residences based on noise levels.

The amendment lowers the setback

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ELECTION 2026

Bresnahan, Cognito battle in 8th Congressional District debate

Candidates spar over data centers, healthcare and other issues

By Jeff Horvath
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JENKINS TWP. — Incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Rob Bresnahan and Democratic Scranton Mayor Paige Cognito sparred Thursday over data centers, healthcare and other key

issues during an 8th Congressional District debate, but distanced themselves from the polarizing positions, policies and orthodoxies of their parties as one of the nation’s most competitive midterm races nears its conclusion.

Elected to Congress two years ago by defeating longtime Democratic

incumbent U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright, Bresnahan seeks a second term representing the district spanning all of Lackawanna, Wayne and Pike and parts of Luzerne and Monroe counties. Standing in his way is Cognito, Scranton’s mayor since 2020 and

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U.S. Rep. Rob Bresnahan and Scranton Mayor Paige Cognito debate for Pennsylvania’s 8th Congressional District seat at WVIA Studios in Pittston on Thursday. **AIMEE DILGER/WVIA NEWS**

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