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‘We’re here, we’re not going anywhere’

Pride Corpus Christi celebrates a decade of visibility, representation

John Oliva
Corpus Christi Caller-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

When Jonathan Swindle was 10 years old, there was no organization like Pride Corpus Christi in existence.

His window into the LGBTQIA+ community was whatever he could see on his television, such as “Will & Grace” and news coverage of the Westboro Baptist Church’s protests against homosexuality. He said the latter made him feel “terrible and alone without any alternative to look to.”

As a preteen, Swindle said he felt someone else had to define his identity since he was unsure of himself.

“That’s something you get to decide for yourself, though,” Swindle said in between sips of his drink at a Starbucks in Corpus Christi. “Everyone’s experience is different, but it doesn’t make it any less valid. Pride Corpus Christi’s job is to provide information for our community and those individuals who are afraid or on their own.”

Swindle is the fifth person to take on the role of president for Pride Corpus Christi, a 501(c)(3) non-

profit focused on addressing discrimination and providing a visible beacon for the LGBTQIA+ community in the Coastal Bend. The organization first formed in 2016 and is celebrating its 10th anniversary. It wasn’t an easy journey to get where it is now, past presidents and Swindle said, but there are no signs of Pride Corpus Christi ending anytime soon.

The start of Pride Corpus Christi

On June 12, 2016, a 29-year-old man walked into Pulse, a nightclub in Orlando, with an AR-15, killing 48 people and wounding 58.

Sarah Lydia and Corpus Christi LGBT, a local organization, felt the proper response to the tragedy was to hold a candlelight vigil at Cole Park two days later.

At the gathering, Lydia saw the turnout of the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies and knew the city needed a pride celebration.

Years before, she had been trying to put together a parade but was told by several city entities that Corpus Christi did not have a market for such an occasion.

“So many people were there for that vigil,” Lydia said in a phone call. “I looked around and knew there was a market.”

Quickly, she gathered friends to create Pride Downtown. While no parade was held, an event

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Residents walk in Corpus Christi’s first city-sanctioned LGBTQ+ Pride parade in 2017.
BEATRIZ ALVARADO/CALLER-TIMES FILE PHOTO; GETTY IMAGES

Texas data centers surge as some states weigh bans

Brandi D. Addison
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

As Maine and other states consider bans and moratoriums on large data centers, Texas is moving in the opposite direction.

Most are tied to the ERCOT interconnection queue, though major projects are also planned in non-ERCOT regions such as El Paso.

The surge is being driven largely by growing demand for artificial intelligence, cloud computing and digital services.

Here’s what they are.

Why are some states trying to ban data centers?

Concerns over energy use, water demand and local impacts are driving some states and cities to reconsider how quickly data centers expand.

The concerns generally center on three issues:

- **Electricity demand:** Large AI data centers can consume as much power as a small city.

- **Water use:** Many facilities require significant amounts of water for cooling.

- **Local impacts:** Residents have raised concerns about noise, land use and increased infrastructure demands.

“Large data centers can consume up to 5 million gallons per day, equivalent to the water use of a town populated by 10,000 to 50,000 people,” according to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute.

Maine became one of the first states to advance a statewide moratorium on large data centers this year after lawmakers raised concerns about energy use, electricity costs and environmental impacts. The proposal would have paused approvals for large facilities while the state studied their effects on the power grid and local communities, but the measure ultimately was vetoed by Gov. Janet Mills.

Lawmakers in New York are also considering a temporary pause on new AI-focused data centers while the state studies energy and environmental impacts. Similar proposals have surfaced elsewhere as communities

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