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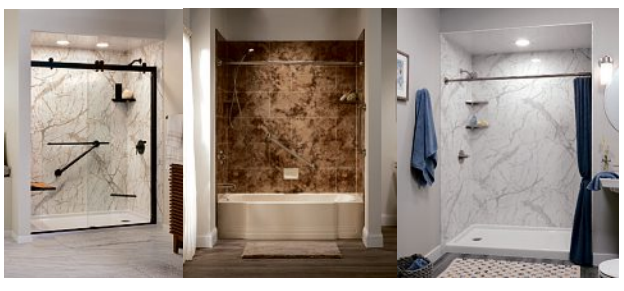
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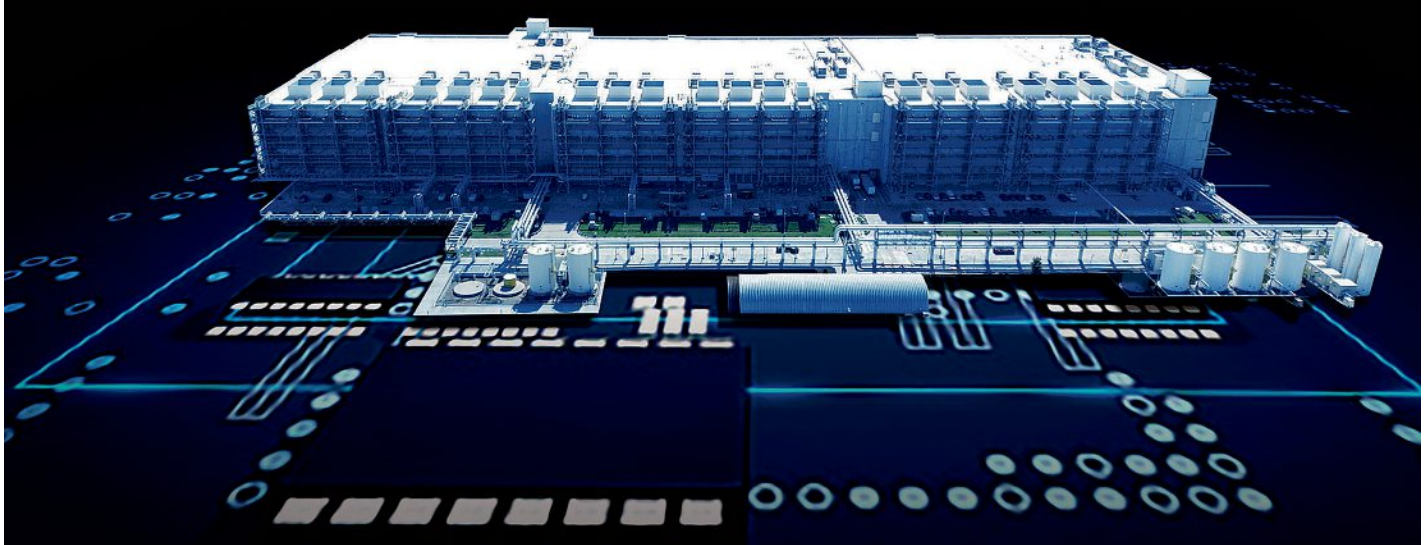
DATA CENTERS: BENEFITS & BURDENS

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 7A**

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

Wisconsin turkey dinner costs rise

Farmers only see 6 cents of each $1

Colleen Kottke
Wisconsin State Farmer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Wisconsin families can expect to pay slightly more for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner this year, although the increase is smaller than the increase seen nationally.

According to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's annual Market-basket survey, the cost of a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people totaled $63.67 in 2026, up $1.83, or 2.96%, from last year's cost of $61.84. Nationally, the American Farm Bureau Federation found the same meal cost $58.63, an increase of 6.3% from $55.18 in 2025.

While Wisconsin's Thanksgiving feast costs more than the national average, the state's year-over-year increase was less than half the national rate. On a per-person basis, the Wisconsin meal comes to about $6.37 per guest, compared with $5.86 nationally.

"Families are watching every dollar this Thanksgiving, and so are the farmers who help put that meal on the table," said Wisconsin Farm Bureau Senior Director of Public Relations Cassie Sonnentag. "Farmers receive less than six cents of every food dollar while facing rising production costs."

The largest contributor to Wisconsin's higher meal cost remains the turkey. A 16-pound turkey averaged $28.96, a 4% increase from last year and more than $5 higher than the national average of $23.68. Wisconsin prices also exceeded national averages for items such as pie shells, frozen peas and the traditional relish tray, while milk and stuffing were slightly less expensive than national averages.

Farm Bureau said higher fuel, transportation and production costs continue to affect food prices throughout the supply chain. At the same time, farmers receive less than six cents of every consumer food dollar, leaving producers and shoppers alike feeling the effects of inflation.

"The price tag at checkout doesn't tell the whole story," said Sonnentag.

Turkey prices in Wisconsin rose $1.12 compared to last year's survey. While the U.S. turkey industry is showing signs of recovery, turkey growers continue to face challenges

See DINNER, Page 5A

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