

About this series • Bandwidth & Backlash

Artificial intelligence (AI) data centers are at the forefront nationally and in communities across the U.S. With more than 150 local news titles across the country, Adams MultiMedia's journalists have been covering these projects extensively at the ground level. Now, we're looking in-depth at how these community impacts connect to the broader, global AI wave. Editors across the U.S. agree: No other issue in recent history has filled so many town halls with heated debate.

Frontlines of the Future

AI Data Centers Move in Next Door

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS • Adams MultiMedia

Dayva Goetzing loves the idyllic views from her family's century-old farm in Houston County, Minnesota. But she worries a monumental wave of proposed artificial intelligence (AI) data centers will erase bucolic countrysides and strain power grids and water supplies across the country.

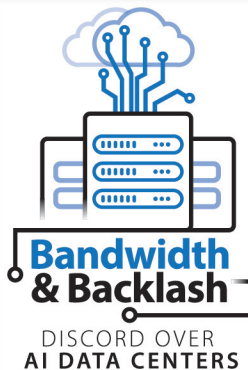
"They keep taking and taking and taking farmland," she said. "We are going to be a land of gross data centers."

Goetzing isn't alone.

'SOMETHING I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE'

Across the U.S., community backlash is rising over data centers' energy and water usage, noise, and consumption of farmland.

AI models require immense bandwidth; a single AI



prompt can use 10 to 15 times more energy than a standard Google search, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA) and OpenAI. New AI facilities are projected to require 10 to 40 times more power than pre-AI sites.

Beyond environmental impacts, there are dystopian fears about automation. Boston Consulting Group estimates up to 15% of U.S. jobs could be eliminated over the next five years.

This anxiety has fueled a groundswell of local opposition to new data centers.

In Dubuque County, Iowa, for example, 300 people recently packed a data center town hall.

Similar scenes have been seen across the country in bigger cities and smaller towns.