

IN OUR VIEW

Data center coming

TDI EDITORIAL BOARD

TeraWulf, based in Maryland, has acquired nearly 300 acres of land in the EastPark Industrial Park. The announcement came exactly one week after the primary election. A 300-acre tract of land is equivalent in size to six Central Parks.

To be sure, data centers are controversial. The leaders of EastPark are in part the county judges-executive. Apparently, non-disclosure agreements were signed in recent weeks. We're among those who don't think it's the best idea for elected officials to sign an NDA.

We're holding our fire on the creation of the proposed data center. We noticed some county commissioners took to Facebook to say they knew nothing about the project until it was announced.

Obviously, Judge-Executive Eric Chaney in Boyd County and Judge-Executive Bobby Hall in Greenup County as well as county judges in the FIVCO area were aware.

We understand certain details can't be disclosed, but the public is demanding and deserving of answers. We're not being critical but their constituents deserve answers and information.

As of Wednesday morning, local politicians Commissioner Derrick Bradley of Greenup County, David Salisbury of Boyd County and Sen. Robin Webb all posted on Facebook what they know. The text of their message or talking points were the same — word for word. Commissioner Jeremy Holbrook of Boyd County, has posted his input as well.

Ashland officials wisely declared a moratorium on data centers until accurate information can be gathered. A city or urban area is less attractive than a rural location for a data center.

The infrastructure requirements are massive. Ashland can probably produce more water but getting it to EastPark will be an undertaking.

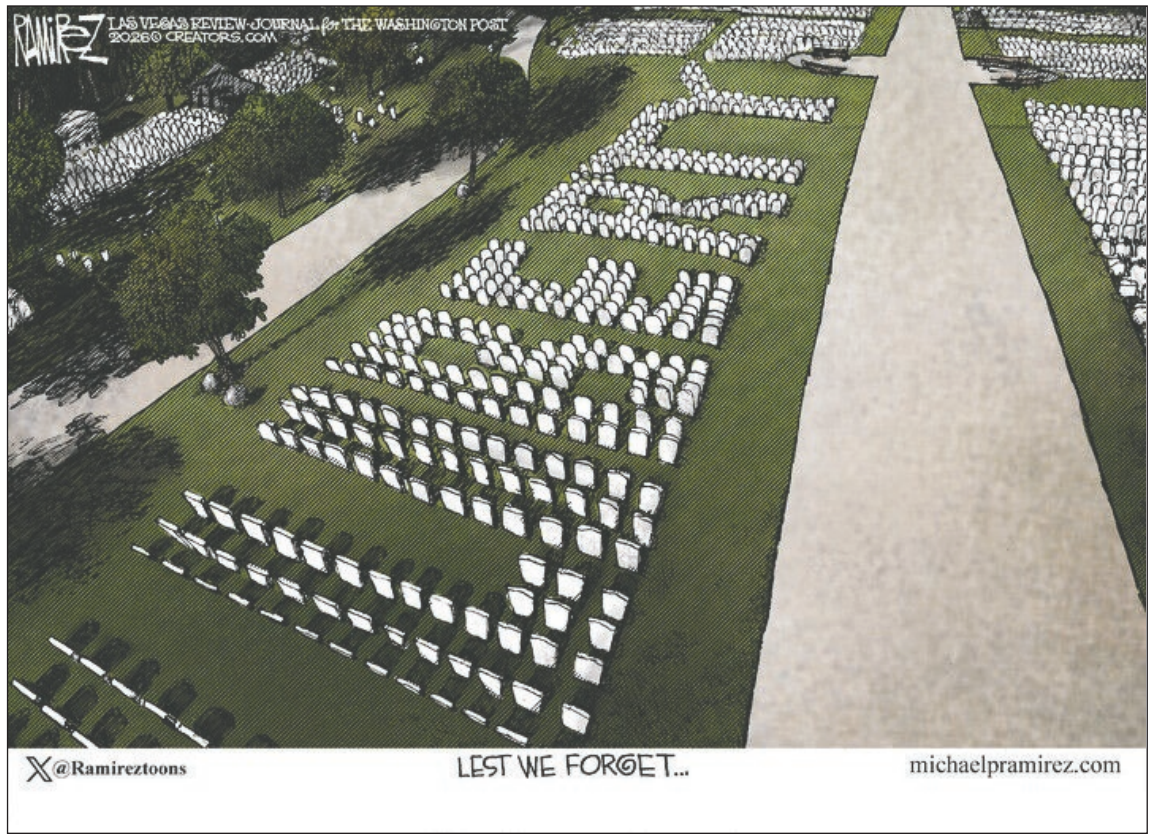
The consumption of electricity will be enough to power several hundred thousand homes. The location of the data center is where the failed Braidy Industries was to be built. That's in close proximity to the ACTC Technology Drive campus.

Not much industry has come to the industrial park since Larry Addington donated the thousands of acres many years ago. Insofar as we know, there is no zoning anywhere near that area. County officials have opposed any zoning.

The big money jobs will be during the construction phase. Afterwards we doubt the data center will employ a large workforce. Chaney did estimate 80-150 permanent jobs in Phase I.

A substantial number of social media users wanted to know if they can vote on the data center. No, you can't. Kentucky law doesn't allow for a public election every time a controversial issue comes up.

We're encouraging people to become informed on this project. We will as well. Leaders said they want to conduct some type of public forum with a lengthy question and answer session. We hope this happens.



Asking for truth, transparency

Kentucky Power already started the substation for the Muskie Data Campus. That tells me this project is a lot further down the road than anyone bothered to tell the people who live here.

I'm going to say this the way an old steelworker would say it, because that's who I am and that's the only way I know how to talk. Something big is happening out at EastPark, and it's time the people around here heard about it straight, without the sugarcoating, without the political dance, and without being treated like we're too simple to understand what's going on in our own back yard.

A massive project called the Muskie Data Campus — a 1-gigawatt high-performance computing center — is coming to EastPark. That's not a small thing. That's the kind of project that changes a region for decades. And yet, somehow, the public announcement didn't come until after the election. Now, I've been around long enough to know that a project this size doesn't just pop up overnight. It takes months, sometimes years, of planning, meetings, agreements, and quiet handshakes.

So the question is simple: Why weren't we told?

And here's the part that really gets me. According to reporting, Kentucky Power is already building a major substation inside or right next to EastPark to support this project. They've got equipment out there. They've got crews working. They've got the whole thing moving forward. And they did all of this before the public ever heard a word about a 1-gigawatt data center coming to our area.

Now, I don't know about you, but where I come from, when something this big is happening and the people in charge don't say a word, that's a problem. That's not trans-

parency. That's not respect. That's not leadership. That's keeping folks in the dark, and I've lived long enough to know that nothing good ever comes from decisions made behind closed doors.

Now, I've been doing my homework, and I want to be fair. A lot of folks in other states have complained about data centers draining their water supplies. But from what I've learned, TeraWulf uses a sealed, closed-loop cooling system. That means they're not pulling millions of gallons of water every day like some of the big tech companies out west. They fill the system once, and then they don't have to refill it again for seven to 15 years. That's a big difference, and it's something people should know.

But here's the thing — that information should have been shared with us from the start. We shouldn't have to dig for it. We shouldn't have to piece it together. We shouldn't have to wonder what's true and what's rumor. When something this big is coming to your community, the people deserve the facts up front.

And water isn't the only issue. There's noise — and if you've ever been around big industrial cooling fans, you know they don't whisper. There's traffic. There's land disturbance. There's the heat these places throw off. There's the question of how many permanent jobs this will actually bring, and whether those jobs will go to local people or be filled by out-of-state contractors. There's the question of what tax incentives were offered and what the community gets in return.

These aren't small things. These aren't nitpicks. These are the kinds of questions any working person

would ask if something big was being built next door to their home, their school, or their workplace.

And now I'm going to say something that needs to be said plainly.

If our Senator, our State Representatives, our local officials, or even our Governor knew about this project and kept quiet, then they failed the people they're supposed to represent. That's not a Democrat thing. That's not a Republican thing. That's not a left or right thing. That's a right versus wrong thing. It's a public trust thing. It's a community rights thing.

When something this big is planned inside EastPark — a place that includes ACTC, local businesses, and land meant for future growth — the people who live here have a right to know. And if anyone in office knew and stayed silent, then they didn't do their job.

I'm not against progress. I'm not against new industry. I'm not against the idea that this could bring opportunity to our region. But I am absolutely against being kept in the dark. I've worked too many years, paid too many taxes, and lived through too many broken promises to sit quietly while decisions are made without the people's knowledge.

So here's where I stand. I'm still researching. I'm still learning. I'm still listening. I'm not for this project, and I'm not against it. Not yet. But I am for transparency. I am for honesty. I am for the people of eastern Kentucky having a seat at the table before decisions are made, not after.

If this project is as good as some say, then transparency will only help it. And if there are risks, then transparency is the only way to deal with them responsibly.

At the end of the day, the people deserve the truth.

And that's what I'm asking for.

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ALVIN BLANTON

IN YOUR VIEW

Plenty of reasons for disappointment

I would like to share with the public my list of disappointments.

First of all, it bothers me when people kneel during the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner." This offends soldiers who have fought for our country, died for our country, and been physically and emotionally disabled for our country. It also offends families of veterans who have put their lives on the line. There are other ways to protest without discrediting the sacrifices by our warriors who have defended America. It all started with a washed-up 49ers quarterback who wanted to make himself relevant to

the public. He failed miserably.

National news media "professionals" try to put the focus of an interview they are conducting on "themselves" instead of on the topic at hand.

Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel must think they are "kings" because they are still on the air despite poor ratings and the political statements they make that are detrimental to our country.

Thomas Massie and Marjorie Taylor Greene have turned their backs on their party.

Top Democrats lied about Biden's mental acuity in office and have now written books about it. They expect the American people to forget about it. I don't think so!

Political protestors are disrupting ICE agents in performing their duties. These acts are the reasons for the accidents that have taken place.

The war with Iran is not "Trump's War" — it is America's War. Iran has always cried, "Death to America!"

People who support murderers by outwardly supporting them in public ... what is wrong with them?

I believe Donald Trump loves America. He didn't have to face criticism and three assassination attempts. He could have a comfortable lifestyle but chose to step up for our country.

Bryan Fleming Ashland

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