



U.S. DEPARTMENT
of **ENERGY**

Office of Indian Energy
Policy and Programs

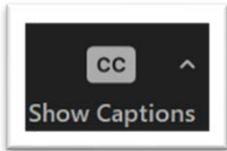
Beyond Land Leases: Harnessing Data Centers for Tribal Economic Development

Office of Indian Energy

February 12, 2026

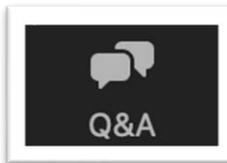
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Today's Agenda

Introduction from the DOE Office of
Indian Energy

Ken Ahmann

COO and Co-Founder of Colusa Indian Energy

Ryan Brooks

CTO and General Manager of Data Holdings

Panel Discussion

Office of Indian Energy Mission

The Office's mission is in its Congressional authorizing statute:

- **Promote** Tribal energy development, efficiency, and use.
- **Reduce** or **stabilize** energy costs.
- **Enhance** and **strengthen** Tribal energy and economic infrastructure.
- **Electrify** Indian lands and homes.

The Office of Indian Energy was established by Congress in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 under 45 USC 7144e & 25 USC 3502(b).



The remote Native Village of Unalakleet, Alaska completed two rounds of technical assistance with the Office of Indian Energy, focused on energy efficiency and microgrids. Photo by Werner Slocum / NREL.

Data Centers

Modular/Container



- Portable and scalable
- Rapid setup in remote or emergency scenarios
- 0.1-2 MW

Edge/Micro



- Small, modular units
- Low-latency services close to users and data sources
- < 1 MW

Enterprise



- Medium-to-large
- Secure, customized infrastructure for large organizations
- 1-10 MW

Colocation



- (Multi-Tenant) Large, shared facilities
- Cost-effective infrastructure for multiple businesses
- 5-50 MW

Hyperscale



- Extremely large
- Massive-scale operations with high efficiency
- 50-200+ MW

Data Centers: Opportunities & Considerations

Opportunities:



Land Leases



Power Purchase Agreements



Infrastructure Development



Job Creation

Considerations:



Water Use



Local Impacts



Transmission Infrastructure and Interconnection



Fiber Connectivity

Speed is a key selling point for data center developers

How the Office of Indian Energy Can Help

The Office of Indian Energy can support many different stages of the planning process.



Curious whether you have a good site for a data center?

Legal & regulatory technical assistance



Approached by a developer?

Introductions to developers



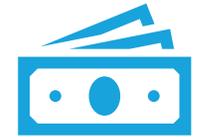
Interested in finding a developer to partner with?

Educational resources & engineering TA



Considering legal, regulatory, and/or utility impacts of a data center?

Site evaluation support



Looking for energy project funding?

Contact the Office of Indian Energy to discuss your needs!

Stay Connected!



Office of Indian Energy

(240) 562-1352

indianenergy@hq.doe.gov
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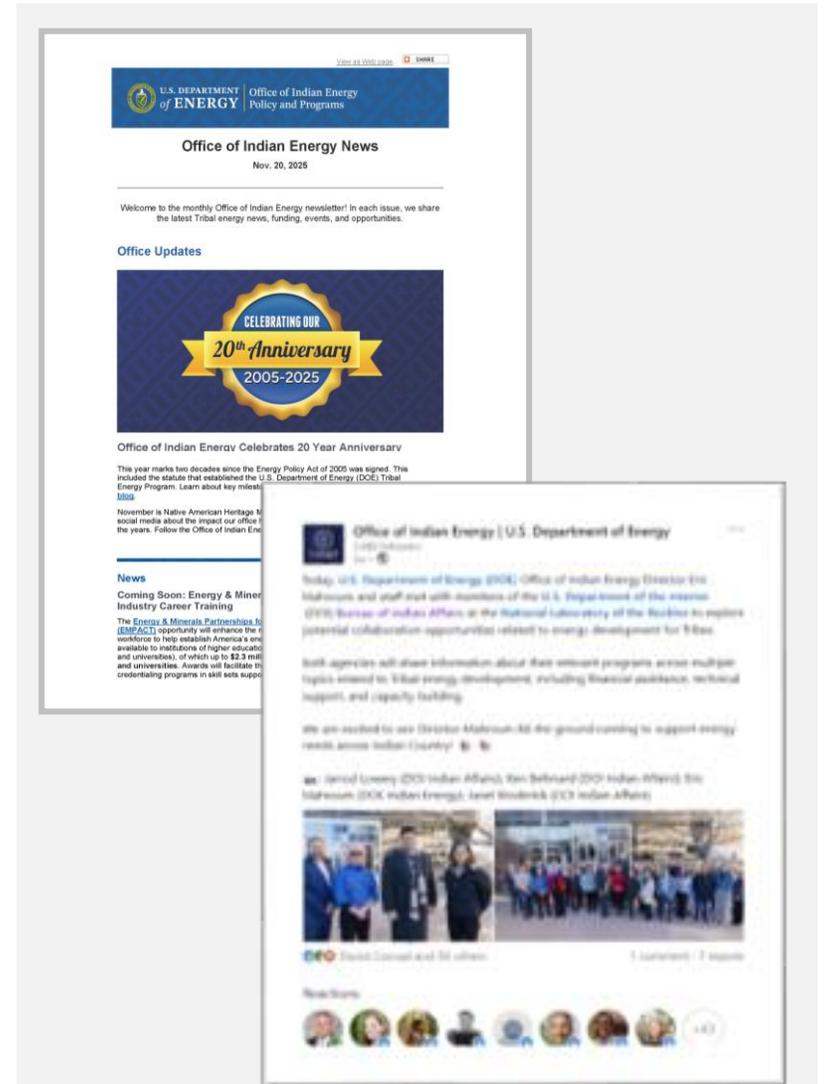
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Colusa Indian Energy: Leading the Tribal Energy Sovereignty Revolution

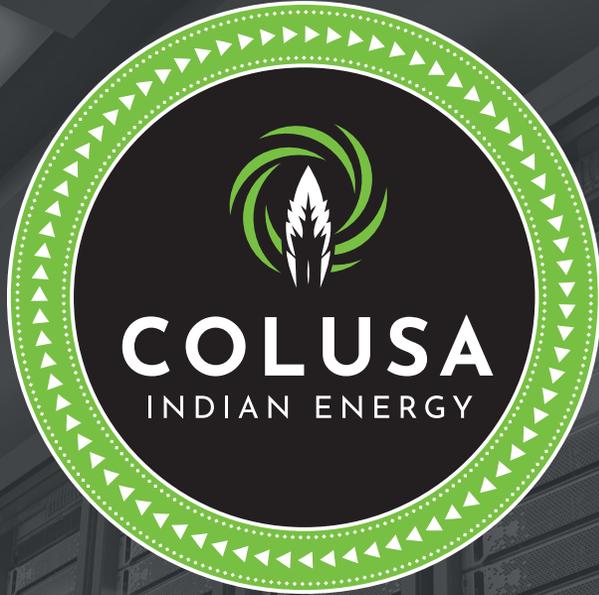
Ken Ahmann

COO and Co-Founder of Colusa Indian
Energy



Colusa Indian Energy

Leading the Tribal Energy
Sovereignty Revolution



Part One:

Building The Energy Foundation

Welcome to Colusa

Colusa Indian Energy is the sole Tribally owned microgrid developer in the country, bringing decades of subject matter expertise to this unique endeavor. The Colusa Indian Community in Northern California is the sole owner of CIE, the leader in the Tribal energy sovereignty revolution.

Our mission is to promote Tribal economic development, Tribal member workforce mobilization, and energy independence across Indian Country.



Colusa Indian Community

Located about an hour north of Sacramento, California, the Colusa Indian Community consists of 115 members of the Cachil Dehe Band of Wintun Indians and a total of 160 residents.

The Tribe resides in the heart of Northern California's agricultural land on a 290-acre reservation, along the Sacramento River. The Tribe also has 16,000 acres of farmland.

The Colusa Indian Community owns and operates the Colusa Casino Resort, which is powered, heated, and cooled by the Tribal Utility Authority's cogeneration power plant. The TUA's 9.1MW microgrid has had zero power interruptions in over 14 years.



CIC to CIE Timeline

- **2004** – Colusa Casino Resort expanded and hotel built – 50+ power interruptions/year
- **2005** – The Tribe built a 4MW gas engine cogen plant to power the resort, government admin campus, and both water treatment plants
- **2005-2012** – Average annual rate of power interruptions fell to 3
- **2012** – The plant’s backup power expansion project commissioned, including 4MW UPS and 4MW backup diesels
Zero unplanned power interruptions since
- **2014** – Grant-funded 500kW canopy solar and 100kW rooftop solar installed and integrated into the microgrid
- **2018** – Original four gas engines replaced at 80,000 operating hours, two additional gas engines added for total gas engine capacity of 6MW
- **2019** – Grant-funded solar project completed with four additional solar canopies installed, bringing total PV capacity up to 1.1MW
- **2020** - Grant funding secured to expand the microgrid to power the entire reservation, including Tribal members’ homes, various ag loads, mini-mart, construction shop, and more
- **2021** - CIC Tribal Utility Authority created in 2021 and PG&E removed from the entire reservation
- **2022** - Absorption chiller expansion project, UPS expansion project, 2MW BESS install

2023

- **Colusa Indian Energy Founded**
- CIE's Mission:
 - Export our decades of microgrid expertise to all Tribes that want it
 - Promote Tribal energy sovereignty by assisting Tribes with their own TUA creation and management
 - Act as a firewall between Tribes and non-Tribal entities in the energy infrastructure space across Indian Country



Colusa Indian Energy Services



Turnkey microgrid and renewable energy project EPC, O&M



Energy workforce development training



Grant funding identification and application technical assistance, additional financing identification



Rapid Rack solar racking – the only Tribally-owned solar racking company in the US



TUA formation assistance



Building an Alliance of Tribes who can depend on each other for resources in energy infrastructure, including technical help, training, funding, gas procurement, etc.



Energy consulting

Partnerships

- Colusa Indian Energy has formed strategic partnerships with multiple manufacturers of prime movers (2G Energy, Jenbacher, and Caterpillar), chillers (Broad and Trane), battery UPS and BESS systems (Omniverter and Vessyl), and engine emission control systems (Miratech). CIE is also partnered with Navajo Power, a Native-owned utility scale solar PV developer.
- These partnerships have secured distributor level pricing on equipment, parts, and service and have allowed CIE access to top level factory training, most of which is unavailable to typical developers or end users.
- CIE partners with KPMG, one of the “Big 4” accounting firms, to provide IRA requirement consulting to the Tribes we work with.
- CIE is also a preferred developer of the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy, a national non-profit whose aim is to connect Tribes with energy infrastructure assistance.



Leadership Team

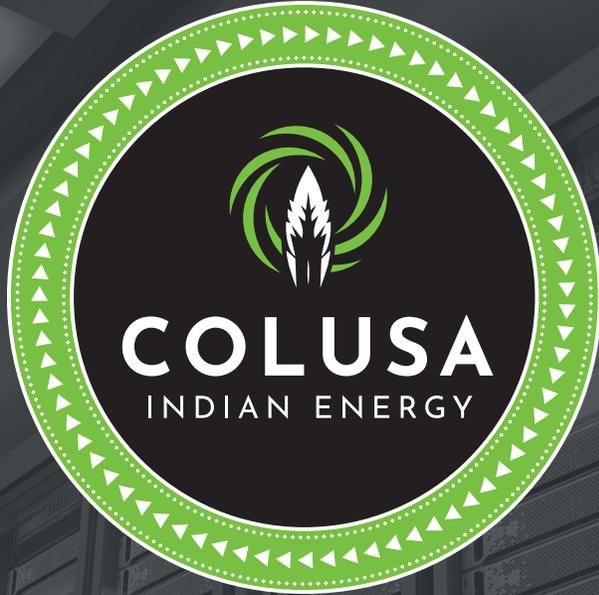
- Our team offers decades of experience in development and delivery of turnkey power generation projects, with comprehensive expertise in engineering, procurement, and construction, and a track record of excellence in successfully delivering projects of all sizes.
- Before its establishment in 2023, the CIE team had already installed over 2500 MW of power generation projects nationwide, including over 400MW of solar PV projects. Our expertise is recognized by partnerships and installations with major entities like PG&E, Stewart & Stevenson, and various public utility districts.
- Our team members were also the leads on the Colusa microgrid design, construction, expansion, management, operation, and maintenance since commissioning in 2005.



Operational Milestones

- 22 years operating microgrid in island mode
- Powers every load on the Reservation and thousands of acres of agricultural load.
- **14 years without any outages**
- Launched first Tribally owned EPC energy developer
 - Engineering expertise in-house – acquired engineering company – electrical and civil
 - Grants department have helped several Tribes secure hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants and technical assistance funding
 - Act as a firewall between Tribes and non-Tribal entities in the energy infrastructure space across Indian Country



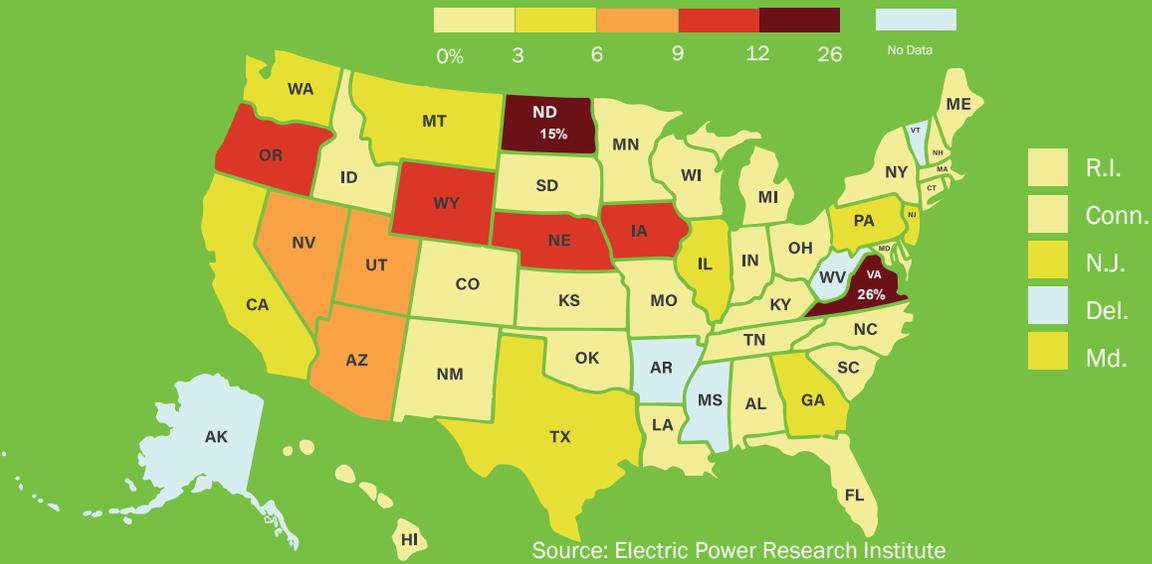


Part Two: Leading Into The Future

Data Centers + Microgrids Is The New Opportunity

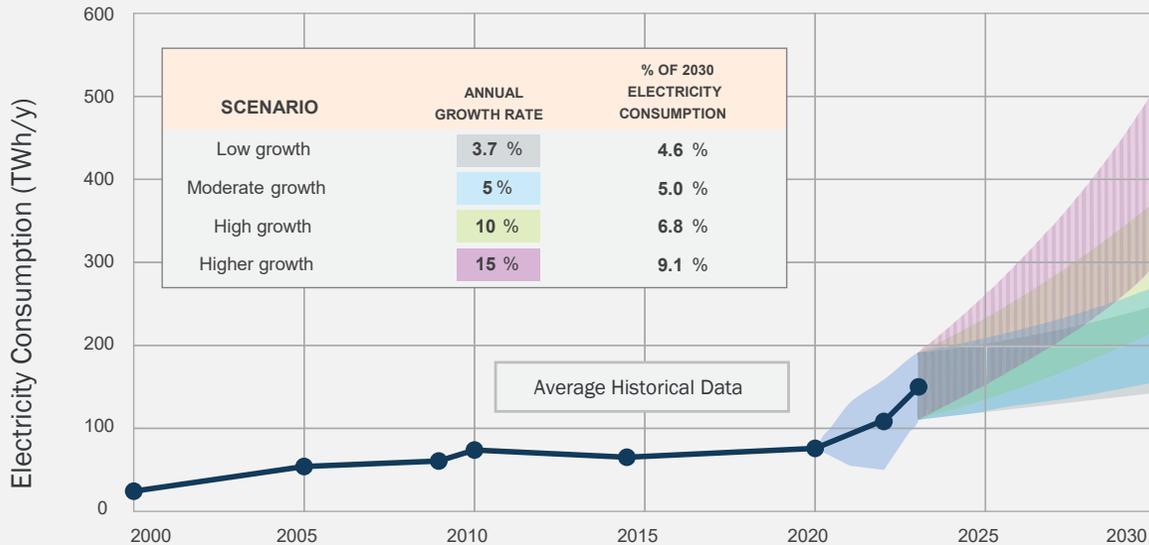


Data Centers' Share of Total Power Consumption 2023



Unprecedented Power Needs

- Electric utilities and transmission cannot grow fast enough to supply power demanded
- Data centers driving increased power needs, expected to double by 2030
- Behind-the-meter solutions faster to implement
- Tribes can facilitate deployment by controlling permitting, zoning, and land leases (HEARTH Act)



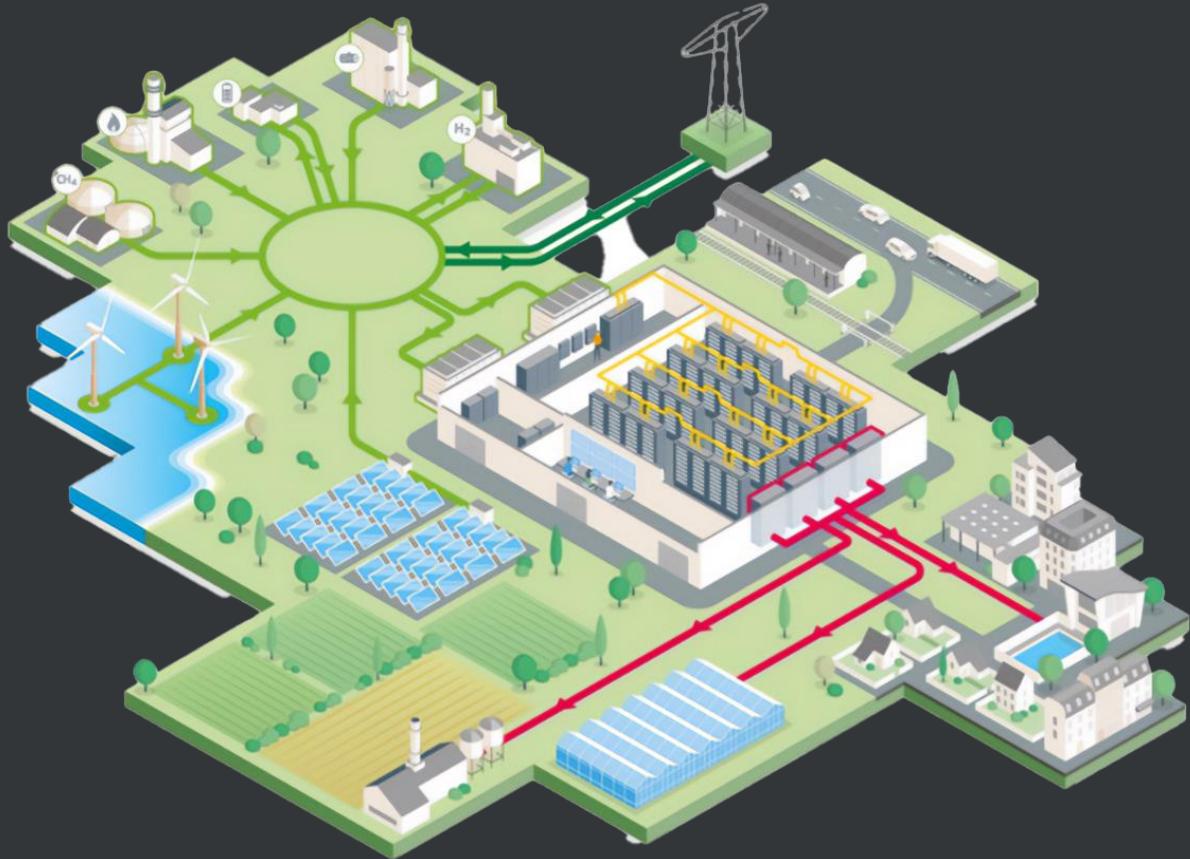
Projections of potential electricity consumption by U.S. data centers: 2023-2030 . % of 2030 electricity consumption projections assume that all other (non-data center) load increases at 1% annually



Microgrids

- Address the power gaps without the need for transmission power
- Can operate independently or in parallel with the utility
- Much faster implementation to meet growing power demands for data centers (~24 months vs. 5-10 years for utility companies)
- Hybrid model with firm base load combined heat and power, solar PV, battery storage, etc.

Powering Data Centers



Electrical distribution to IT



Reuse of waste heat



Decentralized power generation and storage



Optional utility distribution feed

Strategic Advantages of Indian Country

Why Tribes Are Attractive to Data Centers

- On-site power can be built now, not 5–10 years out
- Fewer layers of permitting for on-site generation
- Behind-the-meter power avoids utility bottlenecks
- Large, long-term power customers
- Easy to pair data centers with solar, storage, CHP, and district energy
- Secure, controlled locations outside congested cities
- Access to fiber routes, energy grids, gas, and markets
- Long-term partnerships, not short-term speculation



Benefits to Indian Country

- New energy infrastructure funded by private capital
- Faster development and earlier revenue
- Tribal control over energy costs and reliability
- Jobs, long-term lease payments, and service revenue
- Lower-cost energy and progress toward climate goals
- Tribal ownership and control of data and facilities
- Tribes become regional infrastructure hubs
- Development aligned with Tribal values and stewardship when led by Tribe



Minimum Location Requirements



Available Trust Land

- Targeting minimum 30 acres for data center + energy infrastructure.
- More land = higher % of solar PV.



Natural Gas

- Being free to develop gas fired assets expedites Tribes ahead of virtually anyone else in states with new, stringent, clean energy requirements.



Commercial Fiber Optic

- Fiber optic trunk line must be within proximity to development parcel.



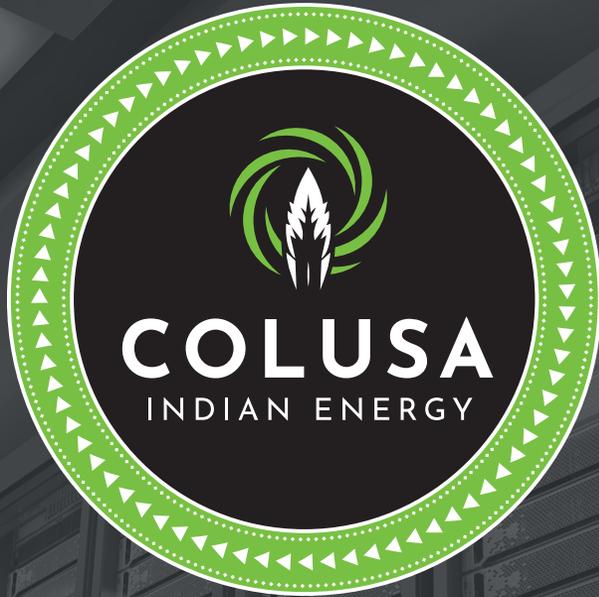
Data Centers

Typical Land Requirements:

400 MW of data requires about 50 acres for the data center plus power plant.



Distribution Facilities



Contact Us

info@colusaindianenergy.com

530.961.5039

3730 Highway 45, Colusa, CA 95932

www.colusaindianenergy.com

Thank You

Beyond Land Leases

Ryan Brooks

CTO and General Manager of Data
Holdings

Beyond Land Leases

ryan.brooks@dataholdings.com



**DATA
HOLDINGS**

Who we are

13 years of uptime

- Potawatomi Ventures, BD arm of Forest County Potawatomi
- 100% Ownership
- Located on Trust Land in Milwaukee
- Commissioned 13+ years ago
- Sharing information



DATA HOLDINGS



Data Holdings

Who we are.

- Public data center built for enterprise
- Offerings include private suites -> virtual
(Not just a land lease)
- Not “hyper scale”, not public cloud
- 50,000 square feet
- Fully compliant and third party audited

Data Holdings

Power

- 17 Megawatt
- Primary rate
- 6 UPS systems
- Diesel backup generators
- Trust land = no state/federal taxes
- Government customers

Data Holdings

Environment; consider 7 generations

- Ethical Data Center
- Free cooling
- Purpose built
- Urban solar
- Very low PUE (power use efficiency)
- **No** municipal water usage
- Recycled materials
- Heavily sensed
- LEED Gold

Data Holdings

Environment; consider 7 generations

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Data Holdings

Learnings

- Operationalize everything
- More margin as you 'move up the stack'
 - Land lease = low
 - Operate = high, but don't compete
- Purchase of infrastructure service provider
- Partner with MSPs
- Work to become a valuable part of infrastructure
- Uptime

Data Holdings

Engaging

- Consider it a business not a transaction
 - Jobs and training
 - Long term recurring revenue
 - Data sovereignty - *keep it, use the data center*
- Be wary of large deals
- Stick to your values

Data Holdings

Contact

Ryan Brooks

GM/CTO

Data Holdings

www.dataholdings.com

ryan.brooks@dataholdings.com

Discussion

Thank you!



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