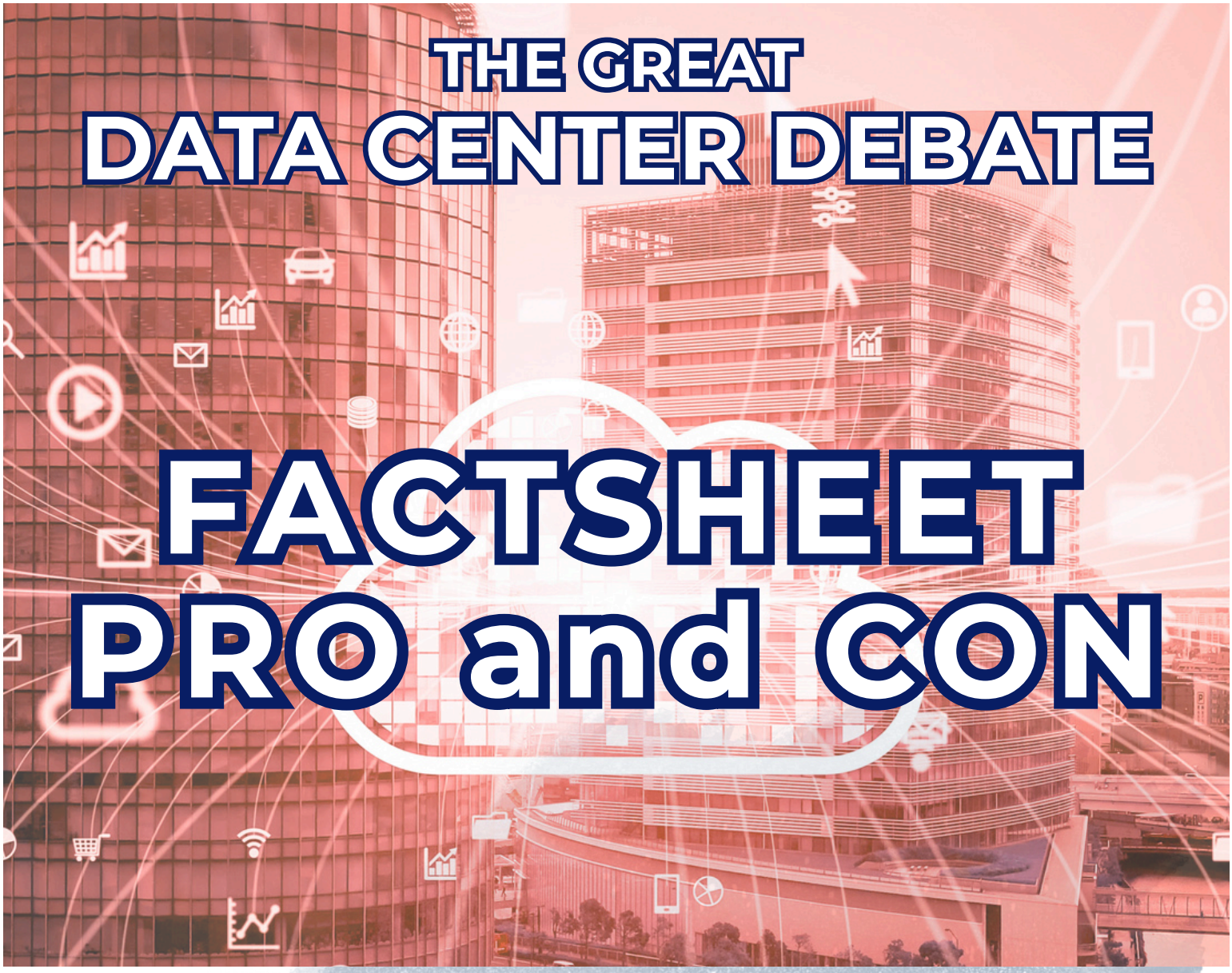


THE GREAT DATA CENTER DEBATE

FACTSHEET PRO and CON

These are the key points our panelists would like you to take away from this evening's forum ... and share with others!

SCAN THE QR CODE to learn more! Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Patriots meets on the third Thursday of most months. Get on our free email list by visiting www.newpatriots.org or find us on Facebook.

PRO

by Rich Lukas

- **Data centers pay their own way on electricity, so your bill doesn't cover theirs**. In 2026 the Wisconsin PSC made data centers in We Energies territory pay 100% of the cost of the power plants built for them, on contracts of at least 15 years. Regulators added similar protections for Meta's Beaver Dam project.

- **They add a big new tax base, and homeowners get the relief**. Developers pay for the roads, water lines and substations up front, and the deals guarantee property values. The Port Washington and Beaver Dam agreements require no public borrowing, and Port Washington expects to collect millions a year once its TID closes.

- **Modern data centers use little water**. Closed-loop cooling reuses the same water over and over. Vantage's Port Washington campus expects a peak of under 22,000 gallons a day, about what 65 homes use. Statewide, Wisconsin's water withdrawals fell almost 24% from 2011 to 2024.

- **They bring good jobs for skilled trades and keep Wisconsin competitive**. Port Washington expects more than 4,000 construction jobs, mostly union. Whatever we decide, the jobs and the tax base will go somewhere. With strong local agreements, Northeast Wisconsin can get the benefits instead of other states.

  Sources: PSC of Wisconsin (April 24, 2026 decision); Wisconsin Policy Forum, "Grounding a Charged Debate" (September 2026); City of Port Washington data center FAQ; City of Beaver Dam fact sheet.

Key Points in the Data Centers Debate

CON

by Jodi Labs

- Consuming upwards of 5 million gallons of water daily and requiring as much electricity as a small city, **mega data centers heavily strain regional power grids**. Furthermore, continuous operation of backup diesel generators and cooling systems leads to significant greenhouse gas emissions, contaminated wastewater, toxic exhaust, and noise pollution in local communities.

- **Immense Water Usage**: In 2023, U.S. data centers used around 17.4 billion gallons of water, a number expected to double by 2028. In the next five years, they are projected to use more than 150 billion gallons, with the Midwest likely to feel the greatest impact. The foregoing numbers factor in only direct, onsite water consumption.

- **Indirect Water Footprint**: Around 80% of a data center's total water footprint is indirect. The water is consumed by the thermoelectric power plants (like coal and gas) that generate the electricity to run the facility.

- **Electricity Usage**: Data centers operate 24/7 and require enormous amounts of electricity. A single large facility can consume as much power as a small city. According to Environmental and Energy Study Institute, electricity demand from data centers can vary, but will account for about 12 percent of all U.S. demand by 2030.

- **Grid Strain**: The unprecedented electricity demand of AI and cloud computing puts massive pressure on regional power grids. This frequently leads utility companies to burn more fossil fuels or construct new natural gas power plants to meet the load.

- **Noise and Light Pollution**: The continuous roar of cooling fans and backup-generator testing (which can reach up to 96 decibels) and non-stop night lighting disrupt local ecosystems and human health.

- **Impacts on Wildlife Habitat**: Data centers adversely impact wildlife habitats through severe land clearing, fragmentation of ecosystems, heavy freshwater withdrawals, persistent noise, and light pollution. The rapid expansion of massive, energy-hungry AI data centers requires thousands of acres of land, destroying vital wetlands, forests, and agricultural habitats.

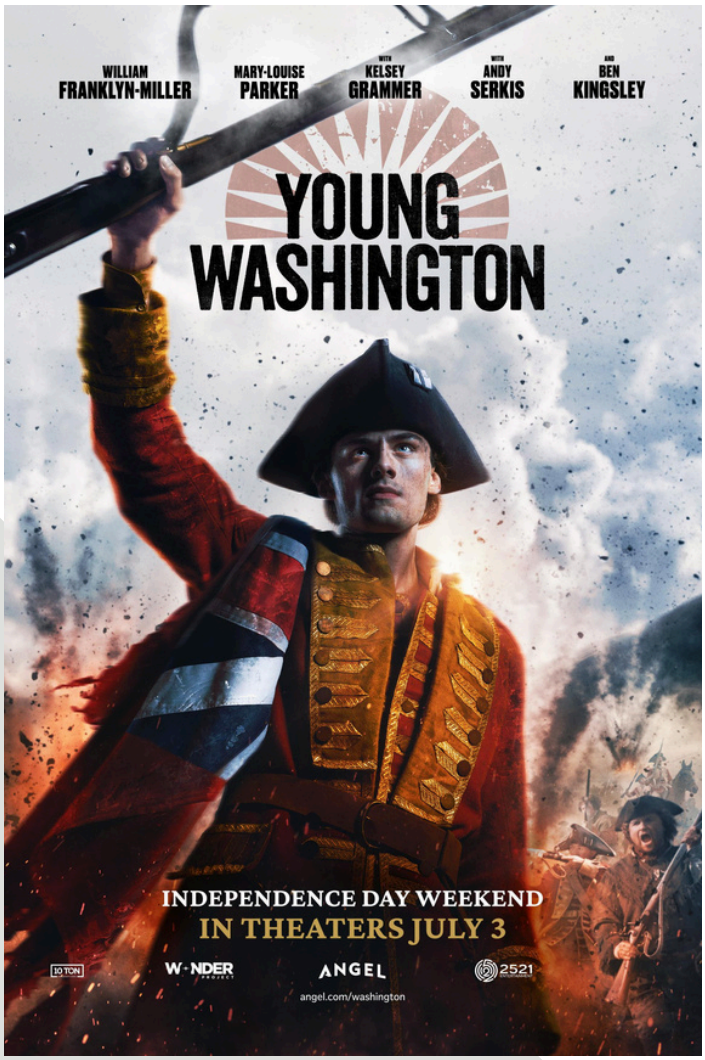
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Monday, November 23

Doors open at 6:00 p.m.
Program starts at 6:30 p.m.
De Pere Cinema
417 George Street
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De Pere!



Young Washington **follows a young George Washington through the French and Indian War as alliances collapse and conflict tests his honor, loyalty, and resolve. The film examines his early failures and how they shaped his leadership, offering a humanized view of the founding father.**

With strong performances, impressive battle sequences, and detailed historical settings, it's praised for authenticity and patriotism. Audience response has been very positive, making it worth watching for history enthusiasts ... and patriots!

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