

Rockdale County Fact Sheet: Data Centers 101

What is a Data Center?

A **data center** is a secure facility that houses computers and communications equipment that **stores, processes, and transmits digital information** (aka data).

In simple terms: data centers are the “physical buildings” that make modern technology work.

What Do Data Centers Support?

Data centers help power everyday services such as:

- Online banking and credit card processing
- Email and cloud storage (Google Drive, iCloud, Microsoft)
- Streaming (Netflix, YouTube)
- Emergency communications and public safety systems
- Business operations and cybersecurity ③ Artificial intelligence (AI) computing ③ And much more...

Data Centers Support Many Modern Digital

Services used by residents and businesses —Even If You Don’t Know It

- Every time you send a text, stream a movie, shop online, or use GPS, you’re relying on a data center. As our lives become more connected, the need for fast, reliable, and secure data access is growing. Every aspect of modern life that is connected to a digital service is supported by a data center—including “the cloud.” The cloud is essentially the computers and data centers that enable all our digital services.
- Healthcare, education, entertainment, and even farming in Georgia are powered by data stored in these digital hubs.
- Data centers support a wide range of industries: advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, e-commerce, education, financial services, government services, healthcare, public safety, remote work, and more.
- Data centers are not new. They have existed for decades and are increasing in number and size due to the high demand for new digital services.

What Does a Data Center Look Like?

Most data centers:

- Look like large warehouse-style buildings
- Have minimal windows
- Include security fencing and controlled access
- Operate 24/7/365 but require minimal traffic from employees and customers.

What are the Site Selection Factors for Data Centers?

- Sufficient land
- Proximity to power and lower utility costs
- Proximity to high-capacity fiber networks and multiple providers
- Tax incentives (compared to other site options)

Why are companies interested in Rockdale County?

Rockdale County is attractive for data centers because of:

- Access to sufficient power
- Regional fiber connectivity ③ Available industrial land
- Proximity to metro Atlanta

What are the Benefits of Data Centers/Local Digital Infrastructure?

- Contributes substantial tax revenues to communities with minimal burden on community resources (due to fewer employees than other industrial businesses)
- Complementary mix with other industries in the region – contributes high tax revenues which enables infrastructure enhancements to support large employee businesses
- Bridges the digital divide in underserved communities with expanded fiber network access
- Contributes to enhanced energy infrastructure needed for regional growth
- Attracts innovative tech-dependent businesses to the region

Do Data Centers Create Traffic?

- **Construction phase:** temporary increase in truck traffic
- **Operating phase:** generally minimal daily traffic (staff and service vehicles)

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How will These Data Centers Help Rockdale

County residents?

- Substantial contributions of tax revenues will help reduce the tax burden on residents and can be used to improve schools, law enforcement, local infrastructure, hospitals, libraries, etc.
- Employment of local labor and job expansion. Every directly related data center job creates 6-8 indirectly related jobs.
- New local fiber networks enable connectivity for commercial businesses and enhance broadband access to underserved communities.
- Infrastructure Investment: DC BLOX, for example, has committed to paying for 4 miles of water and sewer infrastructure which will benefit the residents and businesses in the area.

Are Data Centers Loud?

Not necessarily. The sound emitted from DC BLOX's buildings are carefully measured before and after construction to ensure it is well within local noise ordinances, typically no louder than 55-60 decibels at the property line, which is the same as normal conversation or background music levels. Potential sound sources include:

- Cooling equipment (fans/chillers)
- Backup generators (primarily during testing or outages)
- Rockdale County enforces noise standards and may require:
 - Setbacks
 - Acoustic screening
 - Operational limits and testing
 - Compliance monitoring

DC BLOX facilities are designed to minimize noise. Additionally, the diesel backup generators are placed in a sound encasement and are positioned away from local neighborhoods.

Do Data Centers Use a Lot of Electricity?

Some do. Larger "hyperscale" facilities may require a significant amount of electricity because they run high performance computer chips that consume more power and need to be continuously cooled. Any project must coordinate with the local utility and conform to state utility regulations.

Will Power Bills Increase?

- Georgia Power and the Public Service Commission have agreed not to charge regular ratepayers for the costs of supporting increased demand from data centers.
- On January 22nd, the Georgia Public Service Commission approved changes to Georgia Power's rules and contract provisions that will ensure data centers pay their share and other customers aren't paying their costs.
- GA Power analyzes large developments like hyperscale data centers on an individual basis based on that development's needs/impact.
- DC BLOX has committed to Georgia Power to pay for all new energy infrastructure needed including a substation and transmission lines.
- DC BLOX pays for all the power that it utilizes at regulated power rates.
- <http://www.georgiapower.com/datacenters>

Do Data Centers Use a lot of Water?

Some do, depending on cooling design. Water use varies by:

- Cooling technology (air and/or liquid-based)
- Facility size
- Weather conditions

Some facilities use air-cooled or recirculating systems with limited ongoing water demand (closed loop system). DC BLOX utilizes air cooled or closed loop water cooling systems. The closed loop system is filled once with water at the beginning, and then that water continuously recirculates to cool the facility. It does not use any additional water from the utility during the operation of the data center and there is no water expelled into the environment.

Rockdale County reviews the following requirements before approvals:

- Water and sewer capacity
- Utility impacts
- Infrastructure requirements

Data centers can measure their consumption through a Water Usage Effectiveness (WUE) formula that holds them accountable for usage and wastage of water. By utilizing a closed loop system, larger data centers will be able to continually recirculate water between the servers and chillers to dissipate heat without requiring a fresh water supply. This can help reduce up to 70% of water consumption for all developments.

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How will the DC BLOX Site Impact our Water Resources?

- First phase data center is being built with a waterless cooling system that works similar to your home air conditioning.
- For the larger buildings, a hybrid air/closed loop water system is used that recirculates water requiring no additional utility water once initially primed, and no waste is expelled into the environment.
- The amount of water required to prime the system across the entire 3-building campus is equivalent to one Olympic-sized swimming pool, one time.

Are there Health Risks from Living Near a Data Center?

Data centers are regulated by federal and state environmental agencies for:

- Air permits (backup generators)
- Hazardous materials handling
- Water discharge
- Facilities must comply with environmental and safety regulations.
- The Conyers data centers use no hazardous materials and dispose of no environmental waste.
- Diesel generators are used for backup only when utility power is unavailable and monthly testing, but it is not enough to impact local air quality.
- Data centers may emit some electromagnetic radiation fields (EMFs), but concrete walls reduce emissions, and the remaining EMFs will be no more than a typical office building.

How are Data Centers Regulated?

- EPA (Federal): Focuses on air permits for diesel backup generators, hazardous waste management, and reviewing chemicals used in cooling, especially with new 2025-2026 policies aimed at accelerating AI data center construction.
[Clean Air Act Resources for Data Centers | US EPA](#)
- EPD (State/Local): Handles permits for water discharge (often treated water from cooling systems), particularly when decommissioning, and enforces local environmental standards.
- Public Service Commission: Regulates energy costs. [datacenterfactsheet.pdf](#)
- Local/County Governments: Manage land use, zoning, noise ordinances, and water usage.

- Department of Community Affairs: Updated their Development of Regional Impact process in December of 2025 to address large data centers.

Do Data Centers Create Jobs?

Larger data centers typically create:

- Hundreds of construction related jobs during construction in the plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and other related fields.
- A smaller number of permanent technical and operations jobs after completion.

Permanent roles may include technicians, engineers, security, and operations staff.

- They are considered capital-intensive rather than labor intensive uses.
- DC BLOX Conyers Site will have 50 – 60 staff members.

How Many Data Centers are in Rockdale County currently?

- Rockdale County has one approved data center campus, known as DC Blox, located on Farmer Road. The approved campus is planned to include seven buildings.
- The other proposed data center campus at Farmer Rd and Irwin Bridge Road NW has been deferred until after adoption of the updated Unified Development Ordinance, which will provide clearer standards for future review.

Is There a Current Moratorium on Data Centers in Rockdale County?

- Yes, a 180-day moratorium on the acceptance, processing and approval of applications relating to the establishment or expansion of data centers and battery storage systems was adopted on January 13, 2026.
- On May 12, 2026, this moratorium was extended until September 8, 2026, to allow more time for public input and ordinance revisions.



Clean Air Resources



PSC Fact Sheet