

## Indiana Governor Lauds Regional Data Center Project as 'Huge Win'

August 16, 2018



(TNS) — Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb hailed the new lakefront Digital Crossroads of America Data Center at the site of the old State Line Generating Plant as "a huge win for the Region."

Indiana NAP plans to build a 105,000-square-foot, \$40 million data center that will include a tech incubator and greenhouse for Purdue University Northwest that's heated by waste heat from the facility. The collection of computer servers that would be cooled with water from Lake Michigan could eventually grow to \$200 million in investment and one million square feet of server storage on the 77-acre site on the Indiana/Illinois border.

"I've said the Region is the engine of the state," Holcomb said. "Today we add high-tech, high-octane fuel to that engine. The word's already been used — vision. It's so good that you saw from the outset the potential here."

Holcomb and Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. joined the project's developers, Indianapolis attorney Tom Dakich and data center mogul Peter Feldman, for a

groundbreaking ceremony at the lakeshore Wednesday. The project will generate 250 construction jobs and should be completed by July.

"Think about how ripe the Region is, ready to rock-and-roll no matter what business pursuit you're onto," he said. "You've got the room to grow, as evidenced by this. You're next to one of the biggest population centers and markets in America. We're going to grow with you and we've got that space to do it. It's so important we're talking about phase one and beyond."

Holcomb said the project, which includes a 10,000-square-foot incubator for start-ups, could help drive more investment to Northwest Indiana.

"Watching this once-long-dormant facility be filled up and transformed along this beautiful shoreline, this priceless view, people come here and see this. Seeing is believing," Holcomb said. "When people see what's happening right now... mayor, I can see the bumper sticker: 'It's happening in Hammond.' It's fun to win, and this is a winning day for the state of Indiana and for Hammond, Indiana."

The State Line Generating Plant burned coal to generate power for 83 years before it was cited for emissions violations and closed in 2012. Demolition of the Art Deco building and a clean-up of the site has taken years.

"This was the highest-profile property in the city and probably Northwest Indiana," McDermott said. "It's the first thing you see when you come in on the Chicago Skyway."

Hammond pitched it as a possible site for the Amazon second headquarters, which piqued the interest of Dakich, a Region native who's the brother of radio host and former Indiana University basketball player Dan Dakich.

"When HQ2 was being touted, a lot of cities from Indiana, a lot of cities nationwide were putting in," he said. "My economic development team said, 'mayor, you think we should put it?' I said, 'hell yeah, of course we're going to put in. I'm not going to be the only mayor in America who doesn't put in."

"But the thing is, I didn't think we were going to land HQ2, I'll be honest," McDermott said. "We're going to try for it, of course. When you do, you open doors and meet great people that do great things... We went for it and HQ2 isn't coming to Hammond, but I am just as happy this project is coming here. This is super-exciting for our city."

Hammond plans to create "the largest Indiana state flag" and put it on the site to make the state border clear for those crossing the Chicago Skyway bridge.

"We've identified the biggest flag, and it's in Memorial Stadium at IU," he said. "If this is six inches bigger, I'm fine with that."

*©2018 The Times (Munster, Ind.) Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.*