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Publisher

Laura Shaw

lshaw@shawmedia.com

Editor

Kelsey Rettke

815-526-4565

krettke@shawmedia.com

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DeKalb Facebook aims for environmental sustainability

By CLARE KRON

Facebook's decision to build a data center in DeKalb is remarkable in itself.

It will become one of only 17 Facebook data centers in the world and one of 13 in the U.S. Through this project, DeKalb becomes a vital player in worldwide communications via Facebook applications that serve more than 3 billion people every month. This puts DeKalb on the map of northern Illinois in bold letters. It speaks volumes about the kind of city leadership we have, as one of the attractions of choosing our town was the strong welcoming interaction of our city government officials.

Facebook's mission – to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer – is impressive, and it will fuel the expansion of our city on many fronts: investing more than \$800 million in the community, supporting 1,200 construction jobs daily during building, and providing 100 jobs when the center is completed.

Yet impressive takes on new meaning with the sustainability goals and achievements of Facebook worldwide, and for DeKalb in particular.

The DeKalb data center will be powered by 100% renewable energy via the Lincoln Land Wind Project in Morgan County that will supply all of its energy needs. It will use 80% less water than the average data center and, once completed, will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold-certified, a high rating that indicates carbon dioxide emissions reduction, water efficiency, energy savings, healthy indoor environmental quality, responsible use of natural resources and thoughtfulness about environmental impact.

DeKalb Facebook will not be unique among the corporation's achievements:

By the end of 2020, Facebook reached its goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75% from 2017, as well as net-zero carbon emissions for its global operations. This scorecard affirms the value of welcoming this company to our city.

Being part of this network of sustainability makes DeKalb a model of climate leadership. As a signatory on the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, DeKalb will benefit from Facebook's commitment to provide accurate information about the climate crisis via its Climate Science Information Center.

"Sustainability and efficiency have been the core drivers of how we design and operate these pieces of infrastructure," Matt Sexton, community development team director for Facebook DeKalb, said about the project.

This is of special benefit for DeKalb, as its data center will be built with improvements learned over a decade since the first data center was constructed in 2011 in Oregon. Sustainability highlights include evaporative cooling to bring outside cold air into the server bays to mix with the hot air of the operating servers, thus reducing the need for air conditioning during cool seasons. Revolutionized hardware also allows the servers to work in high temperatures – up to 80 degrees – further reducing artificial cooling during the summer months.

"Sustainability means more than operating sustainably or minimizing impact. It means having a positive effect on the communities," Sexton said.

Plans include supporting STEM education and engaging with groups such as the Citizens' Environmental Commission. We look forward to decades of responsible growth with Facebook DeKalb.

• *Clare Kron is chairwoman of the DeKalb Environmental Commission.*

AROUND THE STATE

80 pharmacy locations added through vaccine partnership

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news@daily-chronicle.com

The number of COVID-19 vaccination locations across Illinois continues to increase.

There were 80 new sites added for COVID-19 vaccination that will be open to the public, according to a Thursday news release from the Illinois Department of Public Health. There are 390 total locations, state health officials said.

The new sites include 78 additional Walgreens locations for a total of 170 stores across the state. Two additional Illinois National Guard-assisted sites opened Thursday at the East Side Health District in St. Clair County and Triton College in Cook County.

The state of Illinois is partnering with Hy-Vee, Jewel-Osco, Kroger, Mariano's and Walgreens pharmacies to provide COVID-19 vaccinations. There are 16 Hy-Vee, 92 Jewel-Osco, 17 Kroger and six Mariano's locations statewide offering the vaccine to eligible individuals.

"Vaccinations are available only by appointment at this time, and we encourage people to check back frequently for open appointments," state health officials said in the release.

The current phase of vaccination, Phase 1b, includes about 3.2 million people in Illinois. The state is limited by the number of vaccine doses available and allocated by the federal government.

Eligible individuals also may receive vaccine doses from local health departments across the state.

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CORRECTIONS

Accuracy is important to the Daily Chronicle, and we want to correct mistakes promptly. Please call errors to our attention by phone, 815-526-4565; email, news@daily-chronicle.com.

ON THE COVER

Carol Tweedy receives a COVID-19 vaccine Thursday from Marci Millburg at Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital in DeKalb.

See story on page 3.

Photo by Mark Busch – mbusch@shawmedia.com

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