

ATASCOSA COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING



County Impact of Current Business & Future Growth

<https://co.atascosa.tx.us>

BEFORE WE BEGIN

A Few Housekeeping Items

Public Question & Answer

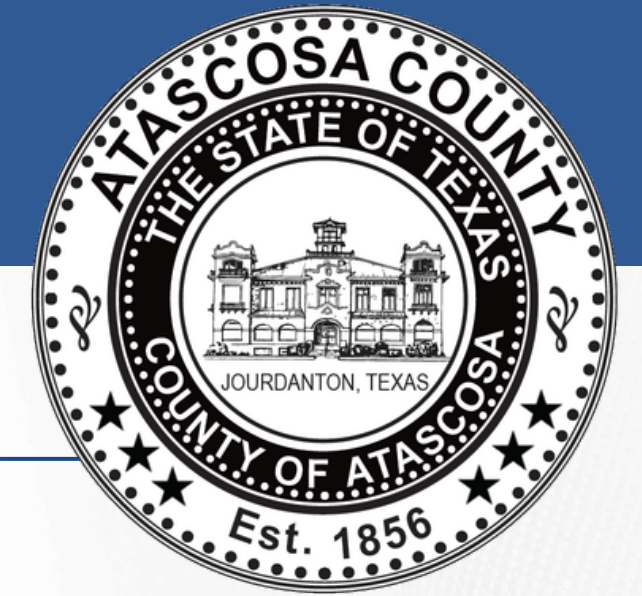
If you would like to speak during tonight's moderated Question & Answer session, please visit the check-in table and complete a Public Question Form before the presentation concludes. You **MUST** be a resident or taxpayer in Atascosa County.

Questions will be taken in the order they are received, as time permits until 8:00PM.

Meeting Handouts

Printed resources from Atascosa County, the Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality are available this evening. If you did not receive a copy, or would like additional copies, all meeting materials including slides will be available digitally on the Atascosa County website following the meeting on Commissioners Court page.

TODAY'S PANELISTS



Martin Gonzales

Moderator for Questions and Answers

ATASCOSA COUNTY OFFICIALS

Atascosa County Commissioners Court

MollyGroesbeck Solis

County Attorney

Curtis Vickers

County Project Manager/Economic Development Liaison

Britni Van Curan

Director of Rural Development

Ronald Sanchez

County Fire Marshal

Mike Pansza

Emergency Management Coordinator

TCEQ Representative

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (Invited)

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Don McLaughlin

Texas State Representative

Pete Flores / William Howe

Texas State Senator / Staffer

Brandi Royal

Atascosa County Appraisal District

Dr. Aarin Teague

Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District

Leroy Goodson

Benton City Water Supply Corporation

Eric Halfmann

Karnes Electric Cooperative, General Manager

Dale Fowler

American Electric Power (AEP)

Frances Merecka

TXDOT

David Emery

Lytle City Council

GUIDELINES FOR TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION

RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

We ask that everyone help us create a respectful and welcoming environment as we learn and discuss together.

Questions and comments should be directed to the panel rather than to other audience members.

PARTICIPATION RULES

Public comments and questions will be limited to **three minutes per person** to allow everyone an opportunity to participate. No yielding time. No back and forth with panelist.

This meeting is being livestreamed and will be available to view later on the Atascosa County YouTube.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Commissioners Court is not taking a position for or against data centers. Our goal is to provide factual information and hear from the community.

We may not have every answer this evening. If we are unable to answer a question, we will document it and work to obtain accurate information.

No action will be taken by Commissioners Court tonight.

This evening's meeting is intended to provide information and answer questions only.

PURPOSE OF TONIGHT'S MEETING

- 1 Share Factual Information As We Know It
- 2 Explain County Regulatory Authority
- 3 Discuss Current & Future Business Impact
- 4 Answer Questions & Listen to Concerns

COUNTY AUTHORITY

What Atascosa County can NOT regulate under current law

- X Zone land use or determine where commercial businesses locate
- X Prohibit a lawful private commercial development simply because it is unpopular
- X Regulate groundwater usage
- X Regulate electric generation or usage or ERCOT operations
- X Issue or deny state environmental permits

Source: Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 232; Texas Water Code; TCEQ statutes

Texas: A Private Property Rights & Free Enterprise State

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

Texas has a long-standing tradition of protecting private property rights of land owners.

Property owners generally have the right to any lawful use and development, and to sell their property, subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Counties may regulate only as per statutory authority granted by the Texas Constitution or the Texas Legislature.

FREE ENTERPRISE

Texas encourages lawful private investment and economic opportunity.

Businesses that comply with applicable laws and regulations have the opportunity to operate in Texas. Local governments must apply the law fairly and consistently to all applicants.

Atascosa County's responsibility is not to advocate for or against a lawful private business, but to exercise the authority granted to it under Texas law while serving the best interests of our community.

COUNTY AUTHORITY

Moratoriums

A moratorium is a temporary pause on accepting or processing certain permits, approvals, or development applications while additional information is gathered or regulations are considered based on a demonstrated shortage of essential public facilities.

Texas County Authority

- Texas counties have only the authority granted by the Texas Constitution and state law. There is NO active Texas Moratorium statewide or in local government code for data centers. ONLY cities have very limited statutory authority to impose moratoriums in compliance with strict procedures and requirements.
- There is NO general statute authorizing a county commissioners court to impose a development moratorium.
- In Attorney General Opinion AC-0003 (2023), the Attorney General concluded that a court would likely find a county moratorium invalid and unenforceable if it extends beyond the county's specific statutory authority. Recently, some counties have attempted to adopt moratoriums and have been blocked.

MORATORIUMS

TEXAS COUNTY MORATORIUM EXAMPLE

- **May 12, 2026:** Hill County Commissioners Court adopted a one-year moratorium on certain large-scale data center, battery storage, and power generation projects in unincorporated areas.
- **May 28, 2026:** A developer filed \$100 million lawsuit against the County and the County Commissioners' personally for adoption a moratorium without statutory authority.
- **June 5, 2026:** Hill County rescinded the moratorium and adopted a developer information checklist in its place.

Sources: The Texas Tribune

COUNTY AUTHORITY

What CAN Atascosa County Do?

- ✓ Require submission and review of subdivision plats and certain development applications allowed by statute.
- ✓ Require compliance with subdivision regulations and state and federal laws.
- ✓ Review roads, drainage, and infrastructure associated with subdivisions.
- ✓ Coordinate with state and local agencies to address development concerns and issues.
- ✓ Protect county public roads and infrastructure.
- ✓ Negotiate development agreements where authorized by law to allow additional county oversight.
- ✓ Require and review permitting for building and fire codes for commercial use in accordance with state/federal law.

WHO REGULATES WHAT?

Topic	Regulator
Roads	County/ State(TXDOT)
Groundwater Pumping	Evergreen UWCD
Electricity	ERCOT
Air Quality, Water, Sewage	TCEQ
Water Rights	State
Fire Code	Local Fire Marshal
Rural Development	Atascosa County



ATASCOSA COUNTY TODAY



Agriculture



Oil & Gas



San Miguel
Cooperative



Sand
Mining



Residential
Growth

Our County has a long history of balancing economic development and quality of life.

ATASCOSA COUNTY TODAY

Population
48,981

Official 2020 U.S. Census

Growth from 44,911 (2010) to 48,981 (2020)
+9.1% over 10 years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census

ATASCOSA COUNTY TODAY

Tax Base

2025

Certified Market Value

\$11.44 Billion

Total assessed value of all property
in Atascosa County

Net Taxable Value

\$7.12 Billion

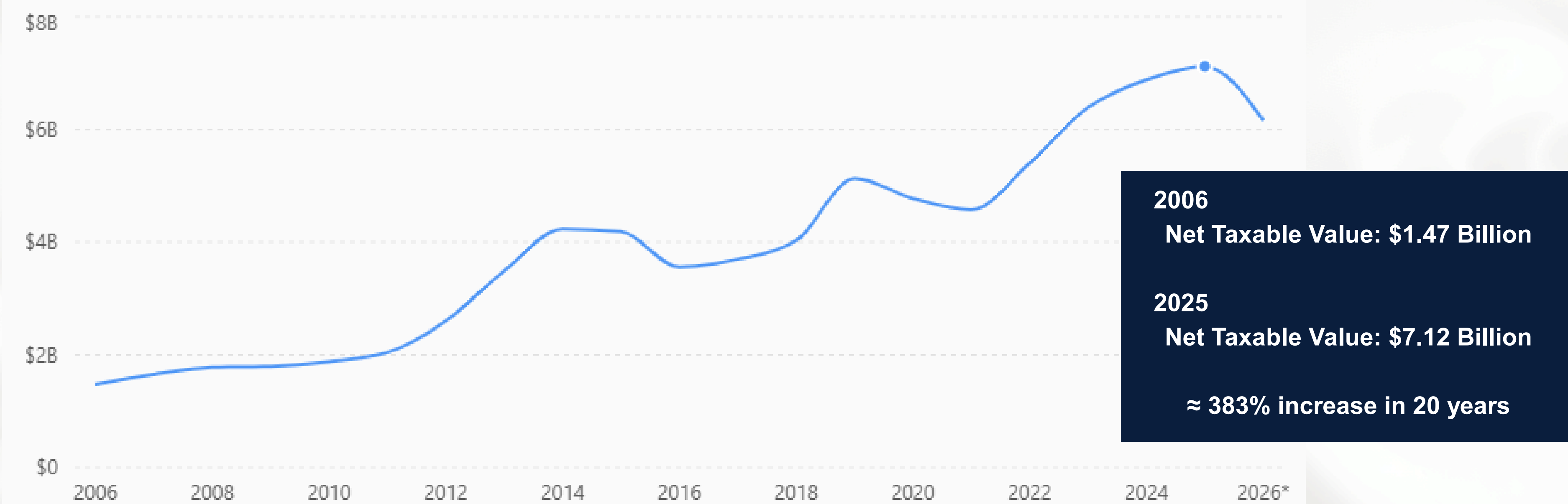
After exemptions, productivity
valuation, and other adjustments

Source: Atascosa County Appraisal District, 2025 Certified Values

ATASCOSA COUNTY

Atascosa County Net Taxable Value (2006–2026)

Certified taxable value by year. 2026 values are preliminary and subject to change.



Source: Atascosa Central Appraisal District Certified Totals (2006–2025); 2026 Preliminary Totals.

WATER USAGE

Understanding the Measurement

1 Acre-Foot = 325,851 Gallons

An acre-foot is the volume of water needed to cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot.

<https://evergreenuwcd.org>

EUWCD

Evergreen Underground
Water Conservation District

OIL & GAS INDUSTRY

Atascosa County

Active Wells: 1,600-1,900 oil | 700-1,000 gas

Number of Entities: 128

Number of Water Wells: 142

Average Water Usage Per Well: 120 ac-ft upon frack
39 Million Gallons/Year (if used consistently)

Land Usage: 5 acres per pad/ road/ facilities
(14,000ac)

Employees: 3

Oil & Gas Tax Per Well: \$100,000



Sources: Atascosa Central Appraisal District (2026 Preliminary Values); Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District (2026); Publicly available industry information.

SAND PLANT OPERATIONS

Atascosa County

Number of Entities: 7

Land Usage for 1 Entity: 918 acres

**Water Usage for 1 Entity: 1,602 ac-ft
522 Million Gallons/Year**

Employees: 80 to 150

Truck Traffic: 1,700 trucks per job

Annual County Property Tax: \$194,000



Sources: Atascosa Central Appraisal District (2026 Preliminary Values); Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District (2026); Publicly available industry information.

AGRICULTURE IN ATASCOSA COUNTY

Turfgrass Farm

Number of Entities: 13

Number of Water Wells: 48

**Water Usage One Entity (annual): 1,495 ac-ft
487 Million Gallons/Year**

Land Usage: 366 irrigated acres (one entity)

Employees: 5 to 10

Annual County Property Tax Per Entity: \$1,639.00



Sources: Atascosa Central Appraisal District (2026 Preliminary Values); Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District (2026); Publicly available industry information.

CITY RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS

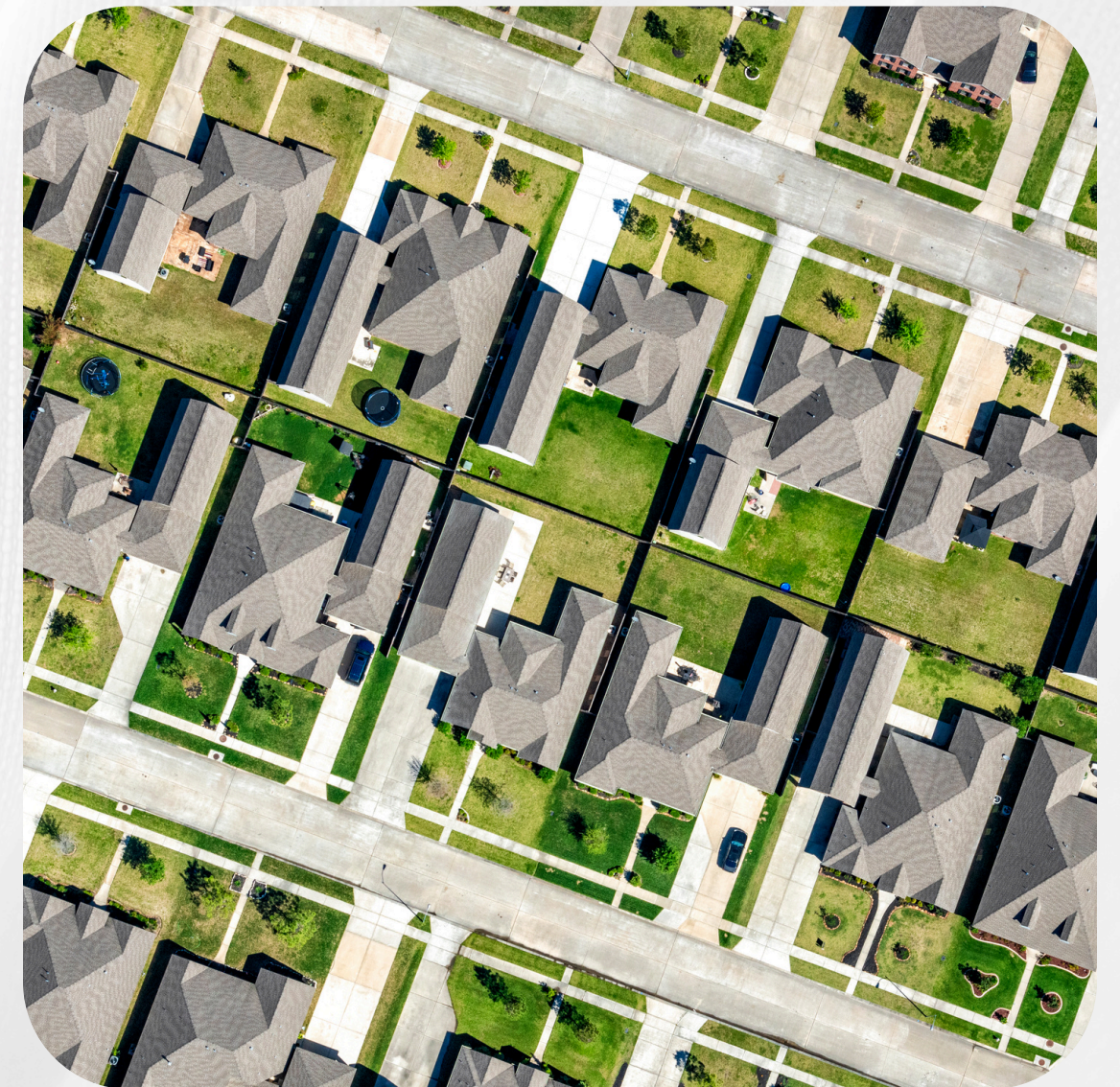
350-Home Subdivision

Land Usage: 80 acres

Water Usage (annual): 116 acre-ft
37 Million Gallons/Year

Total Residents: 1,200

Annual County Property Tax: \$595,000



Sources: Atascosa Central Appraisal District (2026 Preliminary Values); Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District (2026); Publicly available industry information.

SAN MIGUEL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Coal-Fired Power Plant

Land Usage: 22,000 acres

Water Usage (annual): 4,719 ac-ft
1.5 Billion Gallons/Year

Employees: 300

Annual County Property Tax: \$333,642

Years of Operation Left: 1.5 years | end of 2028

1992 Value \$215 Million | Today \$69 Million Value

1992 Value Adjusted for Inflation = \$515 Million



Sources: Atascosa Central Appraisal District (2026 Preliminary Values); Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District (2026); Publicly available industry information.

INDUSTRY COMPARISON AT A GLANCE

CATEGORY	AGRICULTURE (Turfgrass)	OIL & GAS (Per Well Site)	SAND PLANT	SAN MIGUEL (Coal Plant)	CITY RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION (350 Homes)
Land Usage	366 acres	5 acres	918 acres	22,000 acres	80 acres
Water (ac-ft) Annual	1,495 ac-ft 487 Million Gallons	120 ac-ft 39 Million Gallons	1,602 ac-ft 522 Million Gallons	4,719 ac-ft 1.5 Billion Gallons	116 acre-ft 37 Million Gallons
Employees	5-10	3	80-150	300	1,200 residents
Annual County Property Taxes	\$1,639	\$100,000	\$194,000	\$333,642	\$595,000

How does a proposed Data Center compare? See following slides.

WHAT IS A DATA CENTER?



“A data center is a facility that houses computer systems and related equipment used to process, store, and transmit digital information. Data centers support services such as cloud storage, artificial intelligence, banking, healthcare records, streaming services, email, and internet communications.”

U.S.Code 42 §17112; IBM; Cisco.

WHY ARE DATA CENTERS BEING BUILT?

→ Cloud Computing

→ Artificial Intelligence

→ Population Growth

→ Increased Internet Usage

→ National Security

TYPES OF DATA CENTERS

Not all data centers are the same.

1. Edge Data Center

Size: 1,000 – 20,000 sq. ft.

Employees: 2-10

Power Demand: 0.5-5 MW

Annual Water Use: 0-10 ac-ft
(0-3.3 Million Gallons)

Approximate County Tax: \$35,000-\$140,000

2. Enterprise Data Center

Size: 20,000 – 100,000 sq. ft.

Employees: 20-100

Power Demand: 5-20 MW

Annual Water Use: 10-50 ac-ft
(3.3-16.3 Million Gallons)

Approximate County Tax: \$140,000-\$700,000

Colocation Data Center

3. **Size:** 100,000 – 300,000+ sq. ft.

Employees: 50-250

Power Demand: 20-100 MW

Annual Water Use: 50-300 ac-ft
(16.3-97.8 Million Gallons)

Approximate County Tax: \$700,000-\$3.5 million

4. Hyperscale Data Center

Size: 300,000 – 1,000,000+ sq. ft.

Employees: 100-400

Power Demand: 100-500+MW

Annual Water Use: 300-1,600+ ac-ft
(97.8-521+ Million Gallons)

Approximate County Tax: \$3.5 - 14+ million

SOURCES

Uptime Institute

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)

U.S. Department of Energy

Publicly available information from Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud, and Meta

These are typical industry ranges, not exact numbers.

BATTERY STORAGE

What is a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)?

A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is not a data center. Instead, it stores electricity in large batteries so electricity can be used when necessary to supplement the grid.

Common Uses

- ⚡ Stores electricity generated during periods of lower demand.
- ⚡ Helps improve electric grid reliability.
- ⚡ Can provide backup power during outages or periods of high demand.
- ⚡ Supports renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

A data center and a battery energy storage system are two different types of infrastructure and should not be assumed to be part of the same project.

Sources

- U.S. Department of Energy
- Electric Power Research Institute
- Electric Reliability Council of Texas

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The next section of tonight's presentation will address many of the questions we've received from Atascosa County residents, including:



Water Use



Cooling Systems



Noise pollution



Light pollution



Fire Protection & Emergency Response



Environmental Considerations

WATER USE

Who Regulates Water?

 Groundwater

Questions about:

- Groundwater permits
- Water wells
- Aquifer management
- Groundwater production

 Evergreen Underground Water

Conservation District

- (830) 569-4186
- evergreenuwcd.org



DATA CENTER COOLING SYSTEMS

Cooling System	How It Works	Water Use
 Air Cooling (Dry Cooling)	Uses outside air and mechanical chillers to cool servers.	Very Low
 Evaporative Cooling	Uses evaporation to remove heat from the air before cooling equipment.	Moderate
 Chilled Water Cooling	Chilled water circulates through pipes to remove heat from the servers.	Moderate to High
 Liquid Cooling (Direct-to-Chip / Immersion)	Liquid removes heat directly from computer components instead of cooling the surrounding air.	Low to Moderate <i>(varies by design)</i>

Sources

- U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) – Data Center Energy & Cooling Resources
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Energy efficiency and cooling guidance
- Uptime Institute – Data Center Infrastructure & Cooling Best Practices
- ASHRAE Technical Committee 9.9 – Thermal Guidelines for Data Processing Environments
- Publicly available technical information from Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud, and Meta on data center cooling technologies.

DECIBEL (dB) LEVELS

PERSISTENT EVERYDAY SOUND EXAMPLES

AVERAGE FOR
DATA CENTERS

45–65 dB
at the property line*

	dB LEVEL	PERSISTENT EVERYDAY SOUND EXAMPLES	DATA CENTER COMPARISON
	30 dB	Quiet bedroom at night, soft whisper from across the room	Quieter than most data centers
	35 dB	Quiet library corner, very soft HVAC hum, quiet refrigerator from another room	Quieter than most data centers
	40 dB	Refrigerator hum nearby, quiet office, low computer fan noise	Below typical data center range
	45 dB	Light rain outside/at window, dishwasher in another room, subdued office	Lower end of typical data center range
	50 dB	Moderate rainfall, quiet conversation in another room, bathroom fan	Within typical data center range
	55 dB	Normal home HVAC return noise, dishwasher nearby, office with several people quietly working	Within typical data center range
	60 dB	Normal conversation nearby, box fan, window AC unit, steady traffic inside	Upper end of typical data center range
	65 dB	Busy office, louder dishwasher/washing machine, restaurant background	Upper end of typical data center range
	70 dB	Vacuum cleaner from another room, shower running, loud TV, busy street traffic	Louder than most data centers
	75 dB	Washing machine spin cycle, garbage disposal, loud restaurant/cafeteria, heavy traffic	Louder than most data centers
	85+ dB	ANYTHING OVER 85 dB IS ILLEGAL	Illegal



Most modern data centers are designed with noise-reduction features (enclosures, sound walls, equipment placement) to meet local noise requirements. Actual levels can vary by location, design, and operating conditions.

*Measured at or near the property line.

NOISE MITIGATION & SOUND BARRIERS

Modern data centers can use a variety of methods to reduce operational noise.

Landscaping Buffers

- Trees and vegetation help soften and absorb sound.
- Improve visual screening of the facility.

Sound Walls / Acoustic Barriers

- Engineered walls or berms are placed around equipment.
- Can significantly reduce noise reaching nearby properties.

Building Design

- Mechanical equipment is enclosed within buildings.
- Acoustic insulation and sound-absorbing materials reduce noise transmission.

Equipment Placement

Cooling equipment and generators are positioned away from neighboring properties whenever practical. Noise-producing equipment can be enclosed with acoustic shielding.

Examples of Noise Reduction Measures

- ✓ Earth berms
- ✓ Concrete sound walls
- ✓ Acoustic fencing
- ✓ Dense landscaping
- ✓ Low-noise cooling fans
- ✓ Equipment enclosures

Sources

Uptime Institute

American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (Data Center Thermal Guidelines)

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (noise reference)

Publicly available design guidance from Microsoft, Google, and Amazon Web Services.

LIGHT POLLUTION

Reducing Light Beyond the Property

Modern facilities commonly use:

- ✓ Downward-facing (full cutoff) LED fixtures
 - Direct light toward the ground instead of the sky.
- ✓ Shielded Lighting
 - Helps reduce glare and light spill onto neighboring properties.
- ✓ Motion-Activated or Zoned Lighting
 - Some lighting operates only when needed or in specific areas.
- ✓ Landscaping & Building Placement
 - Trees, berms, and buildings can help screen lighting from surrounding properties.

Sources

- International Dark-Sky Association – Outdoor Lighting Principles
- Illuminating Engineering Society – Outdoor Lighting Recommended Practices
- International Code Council – International Building Code / International Fire Code
- Publicly available design guidance from Microsoft, Google, and Amazon Web Services.

FIRE PROTECTION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Atascosa County is evaluating an update to its adopted fire code.

Current Standard

- 2015 International Fire Code (IFC)

Proposed Update

- 2024 International Fire Code (IFC)

Why It Matters

- ✓ Incorporates the latest nationally recognized fire and life safety standards.
- ✓ Addresses advancements in building design, construction materials, and fire protection technologies.
- ✓ Strengthens safety requirements for commercial and industrial development.
- ✓ Helps ensure first responders have current safety standards available when reviewing and responding to new construction.

The International Fire Code is updated every three years to reflect new technologies, lessons learned from fire incidents, and nationally recognized best practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

TCEQ is the primary state agency responsible for environmental permitting and compliance in Texas.

TCEQ may oversee:



Air Quality



Water Quality



Environmental Permitting



Environmental Complaints

- Investigates reported environmental concerns.
- Responds to complaints regarding potential violations of environmental regulations.

Have an Environmental Concern? Contact TCEQ



San Antonio Regional Office
(210) 490-3096



www.tceq.texas.gov



Environmental Complaint Portal

www.tceq.texas.gov/compliance/complaints

(TCEQ) Executive Director is Kelly Keel.

Office of the Executive Director

- Main Phone: (512) 239-3900
- Email: Kelly.Keel@tceq.texas.gov

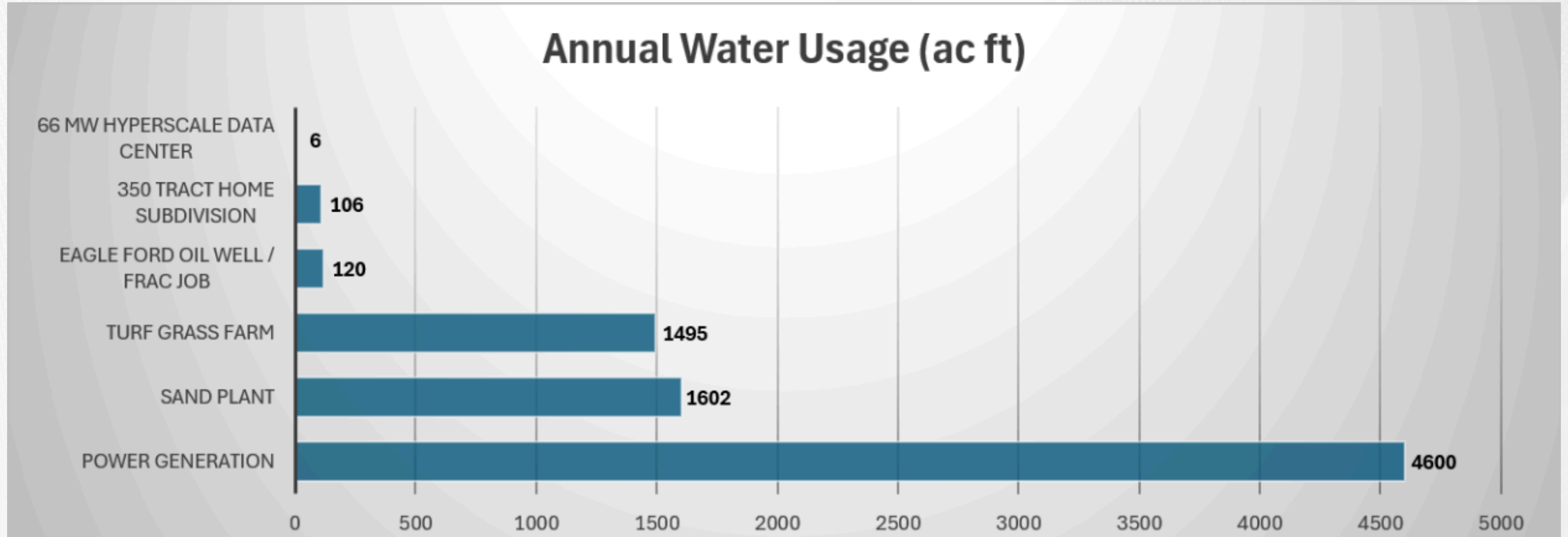
Available Tonight



TCEQ Complaint Card, Public Participation Flowchart, Investigation Process Overview.

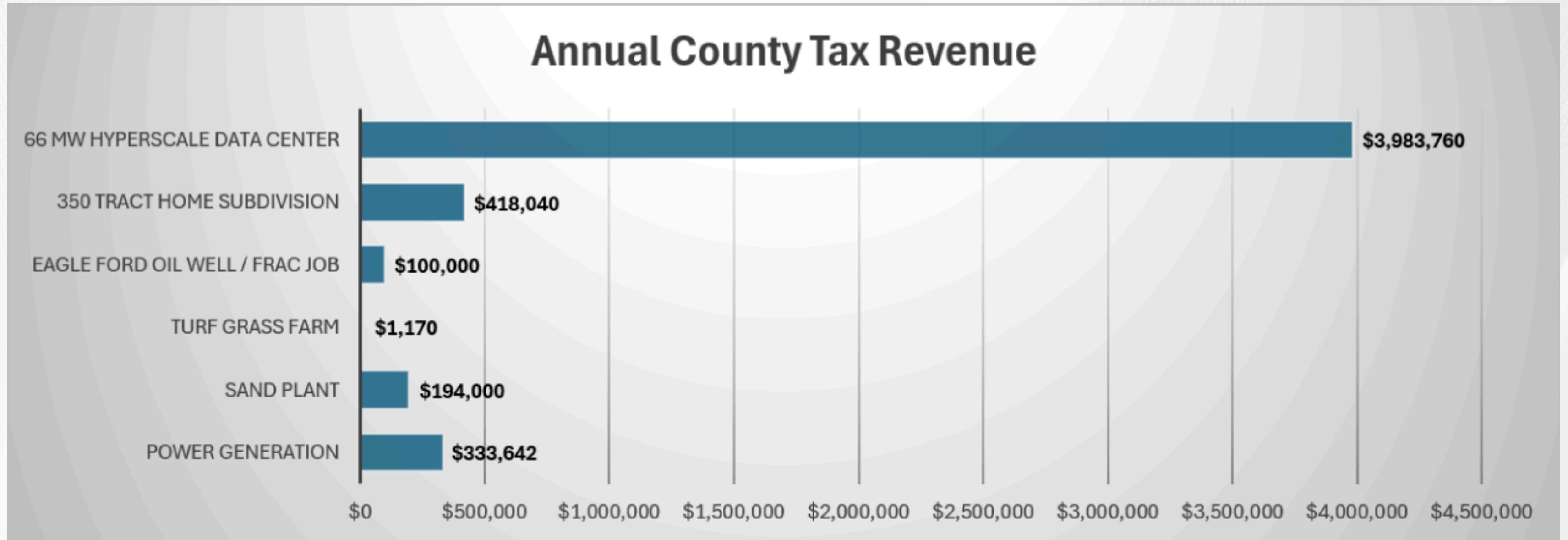
Available at the resource table or on the Atascosa County website following tonight's meeting.

DEVELOPMENT COMPARISION



Estimated

DEVELOPMENT COMPARISION



Estimated

WHAT ATASCOSA COUNTY IS DOING

Gathering Facts • Asking Questions • Preparing for the Future

Meeting with
Experts

Requesting
Information

County
Coordination

Public
Engagement

Updating the Fire Code to
2024 from 2015

OUR COMMITMENT

To gather accurate information, work with subject matter experts, listen to our community, and make informed decisions within the authority granted to Atascosa County under Texas law.

CLARIFICATION

At this time:

- No data center project in Atascosa County has been confirmed.
- No development agreement has been presented to Atascosa County.
- No incentives have been requested or approved.
- No tax abatement has been requested or approved.
- No contract or binding agreement has been presented to Atascosa County.

OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Atascosa County is committed to keeping residents informed and engaged through:



Open Door Policy

- Judge Cude and the Atascosa County Commissioners welcome residents to share questions, concerns, and ideas.



Monday Minute with the Judge

- Regular video updates highlighting county departments, projects, services, and community initiatives.



Judge's Community Column

- Published in the Pleasanton Express to provide updates on county government, projects, and issues affecting Atascosa County.



County Communication

- Regular updates through the Atascosa County website and official social media channels, and live streamed meetings.



Public Meetings & Commissioners Court

- Open meetings that encourage public participation and provide transparency in county government.



QUESTIONS & CONCERNS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Guidelines:

1. Speaker will be recognized in the order they signed in.
2. Speaker must be a resident or taxpayer in Atascosa County.
3. Each speaker will have **up to three (3) minutes. No yielding of time.**
4. Questions and comments should be directed to the panel.
5. Please begin by stating your name.

NOTE: If we don't know an answer tonight, we'll tell you we don't know. We would rather give you a correct answer later than an incorrect answer tonight.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

We appreciate your time, your questions, and
your commitment to Atascosa County.

Atascosa County | countyjudge@co.atascosa.tx.us | (830) 769-3093

SOURCES & REFERENCES

Atascosa County

- Atascosa County Judge's Office
- Atascosa County Rural Development Department
- Atascosa County Emergency Management
- Atascosa County Fire Marshal's Office
- Atascosa County Engineer's Office
- Atascosa County GIS Department

Local & Regional Agencies

- Atascosa Central Appraisal District. (2006–2026 Certified & Preliminary Tax Roll Data).
- Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District. (Groundwater permitting, production, and management information.)
- Benton City Water Supply Corporation.
- San Miguel Electric Cooperative.
- Atascosa County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC).

State Agencies

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Public Participation Guide; Environmental Complaint Program; Permitting Information.
- Texas Railroad Commission. Oil & Gas Regulatory Information.
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Access Management & State Highway Information.
- Texas Water Development Board. Texas Water Planning Data.
- Texas Attorney General. Opinion No. AC-0003 (2023).

SOURCES & REFERENCES

Texas Laws & Codes

- Texas Constitution.
- Texas Local Government Code.
- Texas Water Code.

International Code Council (ICC). 2024 International Fire Code.

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 75). Standard for the Fire Protection of Information Technology Equipment.
- Industry & Technical References
- Uptime Institute. Data Center Infrastructure & Industry Guidance.
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. United States Data Center Energy Use Report.
- Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).
- American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).
- U.S. Department of Energy.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- International Dark-Sky Association.

Public Information & Research

- Amazon Web Services (AWS). Public Infrastructure & Sustainability Information.
- Microsoft Azure. Public Data Center Infrastructure Information.
- Google Cloud. Public Data Center Infrastructure Information.
- Meta. Public Data Center Sustainability & Infrastructure Information.

SOURCES & REFERENCES

News & Public Reporting

- Texas Tribune.
- County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas (CJCAT).
- Public meeting materials provided by participating agencies.

Footer

Presentation prepared by the Office of Atascosa County Judge Weldon P. Cude using information provided by county departments, participating agencies, official government publications, public records, and publicly available technical resources. Figures presented are representative estimates or certified values, as noted, and are intended for educational and informational purposes.