



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST AND DATES TO ADD TO YOUR 2026 CALENDARS!

- APRIL 13-15, 2026
NECA Emerge Conference, Atlanta, GA
- MAY 4-6, 2026
National Legislative Conference, Willard Intercontinental Washington, DC
- JULY 24-26, 2026
Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting, Alexandria, MN
- SEPT. 4-7, 2026
NECA 2026 Convention and Trad Show, Las Vegas, NV

ROUTE TO:

Staff Directory:

NECA Phone: 701-293-1300
JATC Phone: 701-297-5934
Office Fax: 701-293-1301

Executive Director
Ed Christian
director@dakotasneca.org
Cell: 701-371-7314

NECA Executive Assistant
Darla Dybwad
admin@dakotasneca.org

Accounting Manager
Sharlene Larson
dakneca@dakotasneca.org

Dakotas NECA Receiving
Darla Dybwad
crf@dakotasneca.org
Phone: 701-293-1300

JATC Director of Education
Adam Kidwell
director@dakotasjatc.org
Phone: 701-297-5934

JATC Coordinator
Amber Tougas
ambert@dakotasjatc.org

IN THE NEWS...

Data Center Construction: A Balanced Impact Assessment

Prepared by: ELECTRI International March 2026

Understanding the Pushback: Origins and Legitimacy

Opposition to data center construction has intensified dramatically since 2022, driven by the AI infrastructure buildout, which requires orders of magnitude more power and water than earlier cloud facilities. Between 2022 and 2025, data center capacity in the United States roughly doubled, with hyperscale campuses exceeding 1 GW of planned IT load now under development in Virginia, Texas, Arizona, Georgia, and the Midwest.

Community opposition is not monolithic. It ranges from well-founded environmental and fiscal concerns to claims that lack scientific support. This section maps the landscape of objections with an evidence-based assessment of each.

Energy Consumption Concerns

Data centers consumed approximately 200–250 TWh of electricity in the United States in 2023, representing roughly 4–5% of national electricity generation (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2024). Global projections from the International Energy Agency (IEA) suggest data centers could consume 1,000 TWh annually by 2030 roughly equivalent to Japan's total electricity consumption today.

However, context matters significantly. Not all grid regions are equal. A data center in the Pacific Northwest, served predominantly by hydroelectric power, has a fraction of the carbon footprint of an identical facility in a coal-heavy grid region. Blanket opposition that ignores grid carbon intensity lacks analytical rigor.

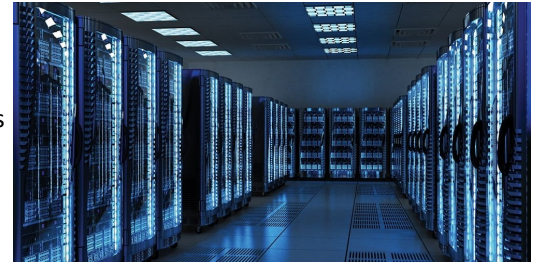
Water Usage Concerns

Modern hyperscale data centers use water for cooling in two primary ways: evaporative cooling in cooling towers (water is consumed, not returned) and direct liquid cooling (water circulates in closed loops with lower net consumption). A typical large data center using evaporative cooling withdraws between 1 and 5 million gallons of water per day.

The IEA (2024) estimates that global data center water consumption reached 300 billion liters annually by 2022. Microsoft's 2022 sustainability report disclosed that its global data centers consumed 6.4 billion liters of water that year a 34% increase from 2021, directly attributable to AI training workloads. Google reported 5.6 billion liters for the same period.

Critically, these figures must be compared against regional water availability. A data center consuming 2 million gallons per day in the drought-stressed Colorado River basin is categorically more impactful than an identical facility in the water-abundant Great Lakes region. Communities in the American Southwest have substantial legitimate grounds for concern.

(Data Center Construction... continued on page 2)



Data Center Construction...(from page 1)

JOB QUALITY CONCERNS

Perhaps the most underappreciated legitimate concern is the mismatch between developer job promises and economic reality. Data center developers routinely announce projects with headlines referencing 'thousands of jobs' during construction but permanent employment figures are frequently a fraction of those numbers and require highly specialized skills not available in rural host communities.

This concern is substantiated by substantial evidence, which the comparative analysis in Section 3 addresses in detail.

Harwood Data Center Update

Progress: Construction began in September 2025, with site development and infrastructure work ongoing through winter 2025-2026.

Infrastructure: The project includes two 900,000 sq ft buildings and has secured power through Cass County Electric Cooperative, with a new 345-kilowatt substation and powerline (Agassiz Project) to be completed by Sep 2026.

Energy & Tech: A 15-year lease is secured for 200MW with a major "hyperscaler" customer, and the site will use a specialized water-glycol mixture for cooling.

Controversy & Approval: Despite objections from Fargo officials regarding oversight capacity, Harwood approved the project and rejected Fargo's annexation efforts. A 20-year agreement with Fargo is being negotiated to manage long-term development in the area.

Community Impact: The project is expected to create 200–300 permanent jobs, with potential to trigger construction of sound walls if noise becomes an issue.



New Dakotas Chapter Member

Dakotas Chapter NECA is pleased to announce that we have one new NECA member. The Dakotas Chapter has 41 member companies.

CEI Electrical Contractors,
Minot, ND

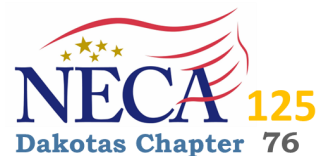


2026 Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Summer Meeting

Come and join the Dakotas Chapter this summer as we celebrate our annual summer meeting, July 24-26, 2026. We will also be celebrating NECA's 125th anniversary as well as our chapter's 76th anniversary. The Board of Directors has decided again this year to pay room expenses for each NECA Member contractor in good standing to send a representative to the 2026 annual meeting.

The format for this year's Dakotas Chapter Summer Annual Meeting will be a little different; there will not be a social on Thursday evening and no continuing education on Friday morning. The weekend will start on Friday morning with the Board of Directors meeting and will follow with lunch and the golf scramble on Friday afternoon. The rest of the weekend will remain the same as before.

Take advantage of a weekend getaway with your family to enjoy Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, MN, take in golf, socializing with other NECA contractors and our affiliates, and fun group activities! We are looking forward to seeing everyone this summer!



DIRECTOR'S Corner

With Ed Christian, Executive Director, Dakotas Chapter NECA

Hello all,

Where has winter been? With the big April snow, for some of us, it appears as if winter isn't over yet. Please be on the watch for Sharlene's communications concerning the upcoming tech school recruiting events. Please join her to offer the students the opportunity for employment with your company. Note we do have a stipend available for recruiting and retention of Tech School Graduates that you employ upon the 90 days of employment. If you have not recently used or signed into necanet.org please do so and find information on all the upcoming NECA events and classes that are available to you. The Board of Directors did approve stipends at their December 5, 2025 meeting, for members in good standing for attending the following events:

- NECA Emerge Conference
- National Legislative Conference
- NECA Safety Professional Conference
- Future Leaders Conference
- NECA National Convention - Las Vegas

The Board also approved stipends for online or in person attendance at any Continuing Education program offered through NECA's National Learning Center. Please let us know if you have any questions or if you need assistance with registering for an event.

Reimbursement Request Forms were sent out to your company designated representatives in January, please submit them upon your confirmation of attending any of the events in 2026.

The Chapters Annual Summer meeting will be held on July 24-26, 2026, at Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center, you should have received the save-the-date cards in the mail recently.

We will have the Board of Directors meeting on Friday July 24th, and the Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, July 25th. We look forward to our Affiliate members joining us and we thank them in advance for supporting our Annual Summer Membership event.

Thanks to the staff for their willingness to adapt and taking on added responsibilities on behalf of you, the members.

Best Regards,

Ed Christian



2901 1st Avenue North
Fargo, North Dakota 58102-3001
Phone: 701-293-1300
Fax: 701-293-1301
E-mail: admin@dakotasneca.org

JATC Apprentice Graduations

The dates and locations for the upcoming JATC apprentice graduations are below. Please watch your email for the official invite and to RSVP in the near future.

- May 8th - Local 426 Sioux Falls; Canopy by Hilton Sioux Falls Downtown, Sioux Falls, SD.
- May 15th - Local 1426 Fargo/Grand Forks; Hilton Garden Inn, Fargo, ND.
- May 16th - Local 714 Minot/Bismarck/Williston; ND State Fair Center, Minot, ND.



National NECA Recognition



National NECA presented the Dakotas Chapter with an award for outstanding involvement as a member of the Political Leadership Council for 2025. Keep up the good work with your NECAPAC donations!

