

Pryor Creek, Oklahoma: More Than 15 Years of Living With a Data Center

A Rural Community With Nearly Two Decades of Experience

When rural communities begin considering data centers, much of the discussion naturally centers on what *might* happen.

How much water will the facility use? How much electricity will it require? Will it create enough jobs? What will it do to property values and schools? Will the community have to pay for infrastructure upgrades?

Pryor Creek, Oklahoma, offers something that few communities can: **more than 15 years of experience answering those questions in the real world.**

Google announced plans to locate a data center in Mayes County in 2007, and its first facility at the MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor opened in 2011. A second building followed in 2012, and the campus has continued to expand. By 2019, Google had invested more than \$3 billion in Oklahoma and employed more than 400 people at the Pryor facility.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google Planning Another Expansion for Pryor Data Center](#)

The project has not remained a one-time construction investment. In August 2025, Oklahoma officials announced that Google planned to invest an additional **\$9 billion in Oklahoma over two years**, including expansion of the existing Pryor facility and development of a new data center campus in Stillwater.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google's \\$9 Billion Oklahoma Investment](#)

Google now reports that it has invested **more than \$15 billion in Oklahoma since the Mayes County data center was built** and that Google-supported economic activity in Oklahoma totaled **\$2.6 billion in 2025**.

[Google Economic Impact — Oklahoma](#)

The Pryor experience therefore provides an unusual opportunity: rather than evaluating a data center solely on projections, communities can examine what has happened after the facility has been operating for more than a decade.

The Setting Matters: A Data Center Inside a Major Industrial Park

One of the most important characteristics of the Pryor example is **where the data center is located**.

Google's facility is part of the MidAmerica Industrial Park, a massive industrial development covering approximately 9,000 acres. The park is operated by the Oklahoma Ordnance Works Authority, a public trust established in 1960 to encourage economic development and job creation.

[MidAmerica Industrial Park — 60 Years of MidAmerica](#)

MidAmerica has developed into a diversified industrial center rather than a single-industry campus. Today, the park reports more than 80 employers and approximately 4,500 workers, with companies representing manufacturing, technology, chemicals, logistics, food distribution and other industries. The park is also home to five Fortune 500 companies.

[MidAmerica Industrial Park — Evolution of the Industrial Park](#)

Google is therefore one component of a much broader industrial economy.

That distinction is important for communities considering similar development. Pryor is not a case of a data center being dropped into an otherwise undeveloped rural area. The facility was located in an established industrial park specifically designed to accommodate large employers and significant infrastructure demands.

MidAmerica's existing assets include water and wastewater infrastructure, electric service, rail, highways, an airport and workforce-training resources. The park describes access to high-capacity water and energy as part of its competitive advantage for industrial users.

[MidAmerica Industrial Park — Main Site / Infrastructure](#)

In other words, **the community had already made a significant investment in the infrastructure necessary to support industrial development**.

A Long-Term Investment, Not a One-Time Project

Google's history in Pryor is notable because the investment has continued over time.

The company announced its Oklahoma project in 2007, opened its first Pryor facility in 2011 and opened a second building in 2012. By 2019, Google had announced another \$600 million expansion, bringing its total Oklahoma investment to more than \$3 billion at the time.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google Planning Another Expansion for Pryor Data Center](#)

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce reported in 2019 that Google owned approximately 800 acres at MidAmerica Industrial Park and employed more than 400 people. The company's facility was already its second-largest data center in the world at that time.

The investment has continued well beyond that point.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google Planning Another Expansion for Pryor Data Center](#)

In 2025, Google announced another \$9 billion investment in Oklahoma over two years, including expansion at Pryor. The investment also includes workforce and education initiatives intended to help develop the talent needed to support the state's growing technology and infrastructure sectors.

This long-term pattern is significant for rural economic development.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google's \\$9 Billion Oklahoma Investment](#)

The economic impact of a major data center does not necessarily end when the initial buildings are complete. Data centers require continuing investment in servers, networking equipment, electrical systems, cooling systems, security and facility infrastructure.

Pryor's experience demonstrates what that continuing investment can look like over nearly two decades.

The Property-Tax Story

One of the clearest measurable impacts in Pryor has been the growth of the local property-tax base.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce reported that from the time Google's first data center opened in 2011 through 2015, the Pryor school district's assessed property valuation increased to **\$325.6 million**, a 168% increase. During the same period, Mayes County's assessed property valuation increased 82%, reaching \$498.4 million.

The impact has continued.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google Planning Another Expansion for Pryor Data Center](#)

In a 2026 interview with KWCH, Pryor Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Lisa Muller said the district's assessed property value had grown from approximately **\$80 million to \$1 billion over roughly 20 years**. The increased valuation has produced additional tax revenue that the district has used for smaller class sizes, technology and after-school programs.

[KWCH — Factfinder Examines Data Center's Impact on Small Town in Oklahoma](#)

Muller described the transformation as significant:

"Over the course of the time since data centers have been in place, the district has really remade itself."

She also said the district would not have been able to undertake the same scope of work over the past 15 years without the increased property valuation.

That does not mean every data center would produce the same result.

Property-tax impacts depend on the project's assessed value, tax structure, exemptions, abatements, local government structure and the way revenues are distributed.

Pryor's experience does demonstrate, however, that **the fiscal impact of a data center can extend far beyond the number of people employed directly at the facility**.

Schools and Workforce Development

The economic-development story in Pryor also extends beyond property taxes.

In 2019, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce reported that Google had become an active participant in the local education system. Google employees volunteered with students, supported robotics and physics programs, and participated in an after-school program involving local business and industry leaders.

The Pryor Chamber's leadership told the state that Google's investment in its property had helped make the school district less dependent on state funding and contributed to new and upgraded school facilities, STEM labs and robotics programs.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google's Impact on STEM Education and Quality of Life in Pryor](#)

Google's more recent Oklahoma investments have continued to include education and workforce development. The company's 2025 expansion announcement included partnerships with Oklahoma's universities and an initiative intended to increase the electrical workforce pipeline in the state.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google's \\$9 Billion Oklahoma Investment](#)

The broader lesson is that the economic impact of a large industrial project can be strengthened when the community connects the project to local schools, workforce training and career pathways.

Water: A Large Use That Needs Context

Water is arguably the most common environmental concern associated with data centers.

Pryor provides an unusually useful case study because actual water-use records are available.

According to an investigation by The Frontier, Google's Pryor data center used **more than 1.1 billion gallons of water between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025**. The water is drawn from the Neosho River through MidAmerica Industrial Park. During that same period, approximately **253 million gallons of wastewater were discharged back into the Neosho River**, with the remainder primarily lost through evaporation.

[The Frontier — As Data Centers Boom in Oklahoma, So Does Water Demand](#)

That is a substantial amount of water.

But the number becomes more meaningful when compared with other water uses.

How Does 1.1 Billion Gallons Compare?

Oklahoma State University's research on irrigated agriculture found that Oklahoma farmers applied approximately **665,465 acre-feet of irrigation water in 2023—more than 216 billion gallons statewide**. The average amount applied was approximately **1.2 acre-feet per irrigated acre**.

[Oklahoma State University Extension — Irrigated Agriculture in Oklahoma](#)

One acre-foot equals approximately 325,851 gallons.

Using those figures, Google's 1.1 billion gallons of annual water use is approximately:

- **3,376 acre-feet of water**
- The equivalent of irrigating roughly **2,800 acres of cropland for one year** at Oklahoma's 2023 average irrigation rate
- About **0.5% of all irrigation water applied statewide in Oklahoma in 2023**

These comparisons do not make the data center's water use insignificant. They provide context.

Agriculture is a major water user in Oklahoma. Oklahoma State University reports that irrigated agriculture accounted for approximately **41% of total water use** in the state in the analysis cited by its agricultural water-resources research.

[Oklahoma State University Extension — Drought and Its Impact on Agricultural Water Resources in Oklahoma](#)

The point is not that data centers should be exempt from scrutiny because other industries use water.

The point is that **water use should be evaluated against the total water budget and competing demands within the specific community and watershed.**

Pryor's Water Capacity

The more important question for Pryor was therefore not simply whether Google used a billion gallons of water.

It was whether the community's water system could sustainably provide that amount **while continuing to serve existing and future residents and businesses.**

According to The Frontier's reporting, MidAmerica Industrial Park has an Oklahoma Water Resources Board permit allowing withdrawals of up to **27.375 billion gallons per year**. Google was the park's second-largest water user during the most recent reporting period, behind Associated Electric Cooperative. MidAmerica said its contracted water supply and treatment capacity were adequate to meet foreseeable demand.

[The Frontier — As Data Centers Boom in Oklahoma, So Does Water Demand](#)

Pryor Mayor Zac Doyle provided a similar assessment to KWCH in 2026. He said that although the Google facility uses more than one billion gallons annually, the city and businesses using the system remain below half of their available daily capacity.

[KWCH — Factfinder Examines Data Center's Impact on Small Town in Oklahoma](#)

This distinction is critical.

A billion gallons may be manageable in a community with substantial water supply and treatment capacity. The same amount could be problematic in a community operating close to its limits.

Pryor therefore demonstrates an important principle for other rural communities:

The relevant question is not simply how much water a data center uses. The relevant question is whether the community has adequate, sustainable capacity—and who pays for the infrastructure needed to provide it.

Water Is a Site-Specific Issue

Pryor's experience also demonstrates why water requirements should not be generalized across every data center.

KWCH reported that Mayor Doyle had been asked to speak with Kansas communities considering data-center development. He noted that facilities in areas with less available water may rely on different cooling approaches.

Cooling technology, climate, facility design, water source and operational practices can all affect water demand.

That means a community evaluating a proposed facility should seek project-specific information, including:

- Expected annual water withdrawal
- Peak daily demand
- Source of the water
- Amount expected to be consumed
- Amount returned to the system
- Cooling technology
- Treatment requirements
- Existing community capacity
- Planned future capacity
- Who will pay for required infrastructure improvements

The Pryor example demonstrates why these questions should be answered **before** a project is approved rather than after construction begins.

Electricity and Infrastructure

Electricity is another major consideration.

Large data centers require substantial amounts of power, and connecting them to the electrical grid can require significant transmission and distribution infrastructure.

Pryor's location within MidAmerica Industrial Park provided an important advantage. The park was already designed around major industrial users and had established utility infrastructure. MidAmerica has specifically identified reliable power and water as competitive advantages for companies considering the park.

[MidAmerica Industrial Park — Main Site / Infrastructure](#)

At the community level, Mayor Doyle told KWCH that residents and nearby businesses he spoke with had not experienced increases in their electric bills that they attributed to the Google facility. He nevertheless emphasized that communities need to ensure companies invest appropriately in the infrastructure needed to serve large facilities rather than shifting those costs to residents.

That is a useful distinction.

A large industrial customer will inevitably place additional demands on infrastructure.

The policy question is **how those demands are accommodated and how the costs are allocated.**

A Data Center Did Not Replace Manufacturing

Perhaps one of the most important lessons from Pryor is what happened **around** Google.

The community did not become a technology-only economy.

MidAmerica Industrial Park continued to attract manufacturing, logistics, chemical, food, packaging and other industrial businesses. Today, the park reports more than 80 companies and approximately 4,500 workers, with a significant portion of its employment base in traditional manufacturing sectors.

Google became one major employer within a diversified industrial ecosystem.

This is particularly relevant for rural economic development.

A community does not necessarily have to choose between traditional industry and technology.

A data center can occupy the same broader economic-development space as other large industrial users—provided that land use, infrastructure and utility requirements are appropriately planned.

Pryor's experience suggests that **diversification can be more valuable than specialization.**

Construction and Secondary Economic Activity

The direct employment associated with a data center is only one part of its potential economic impact.

The construction and expansion of large facilities create opportunities for contractors, electricians, engineers, equipment suppliers, transportation companies and other service providers.

Google's Oklahoma expansion announcements have repeatedly cited construction employment associated with its projects. In 2019, for example, the company said its national expansion program would generate more than 10,000 construction jobs across the states receiving investment.

[Oklahoma Department of Commerce — Google Planning Another Expansion for Pryor Data Center](#)

The local economy can also benefit from ongoing operations.

Employees and contractors purchase food, housing, services and other goods. Companies operating inside the industrial park purchase from regional suppliers. Infrastructure improvements can support additional development.

The result can be a multiplier effect extending beyond the facility's property line.

Community Character and Land Use

Pryor also offers a lesson about **where** large data centers are located.

Google's facility is situated within a 9,000-acre industrial park rather than in an isolated agricultural or residential area.

That arrangement provides separation between large-scale industrial development and other land uses.

It also means the community can concentrate infrastructure, utilities, transportation and other services in an area intended for industrial development.

For rural communities, this is an important consideration when developing zoning and regulations.

The question does not have to be simply:

"Do we allow data centers?"

It can instead be:

"Where are large data centers appropriate, and what standards should apply to them?"

That approach allows communities to distinguish between the type of facility they may be willing to accommodate and the locations where it would be appropriate.

What Pryor Has Learned After 15+ Years

The most useful part of the Pryor story may be what local officials say today.

In 2026, Pryor Mayor Zac Doyle told KWCH that the community has experienced continued expansion of the Google facility since it opened more than 15 years ago. He described growth as a normal part of economic development and emphasized that infrastructure needs to keep pace with that growth.

At the same time, Pryor's experience has not eliminated the need for careful planning.

The mayor's comments highlight several practical lessons:

1. Establish regulations before projects arrive.

Doyle advised communities to establish appropriate zoning and regulations before taking on major projects.

This allows elected officials and residents to determine expectations before a specific project is under consideration.

2. Understand infrastructure capacity.

Large facilities will affect roads, electric systems, water systems and other infrastructure.

The community needs to know its current capacity and understand what improvements will be required.

3. Make the developer responsible for appropriate infrastructure costs.

Pryor's experience suggests that large users can be accommodated, but communities should make sure the infrastructure required to serve them is appropriately funded.

4. Evaluate water based on actual local conditions.

Pryor's billion-gallon annual water use sounds enormous in isolation. Yet the community reports substantial remaining capacity, and the industrial park has a large permitted water supply.

Another community may have a completely different situation.

5. Look beyond direct employment.

The Pryor school district's experience demonstrates that increased property valuation and resulting tax revenue can be an important component of the economic impact.

6. Connect development to workforce and education.

Google's involvement in STEM education, robotics, mentoring and workforce initiatives demonstrates how a major employer can contribute to local human-capital development in addition to paying taxes.

7. Maintain a diversified economy.

Pryor's industrial park continues to include manufacturers, logistics companies, chemical companies and other industries alongside Google.

The data center became part of the community's industrial base rather than replacing it.

The Most Important Lesson: Time Changes the Conversation

The biggest advantage Pryor offers other rural communities is **time**.

When Google announced its Mayes County project in 2007, local leaders could only make projections about what the data center might mean.

Today, the community has nearly two decades of actual experience.

There is measurable evidence of:

- Continued private investment
- Expansion of the data center
- Growth in assessed property valuation
- Increased school district resources
- Workforce and STEM partnerships
- Significant water consumption
- Significant electric demand
- Continued industrial diversification
- Ongoing infrastructure investment

The results are neither entirely positive nor entirely without challenges.

Google's Pryor facility is a **very large water and electricity user**. Its presence requires significant infrastructure. The facility occupies a substantial industrial footprint.

At the same time, Pryor officials report that the community has been able to accommodate those demands while continuing to grow. The school district has experienced a dramatic increase in its property-tax base, and the industrial park has continued to attract a diverse range of employers.

Google's own current figures put its Oklahoma investment at more than **\$15 billion since the Mayes County data center was built**, with **\$2.6 billion in economic activity in Oklahoma during 2025** associated with Google's products and services.

[Google Economic Impact — Oklahoma](#)

The important lesson is not that every community should accept every proposed data center.

It is that **a data center is not inherently beneficial or harmful in isolation. Its impact depends on the project, the site, the infrastructure, the utility system, the tax structure, the water supply and the regulations governing it.**

Pryor demonstrates what can happen when a rural community has a large industrial site, significant infrastructure capacity, a long-term economic-development strategy and a willingness to continue planning as the community grows.

What Pryor Means for Communities Considering Data Centers

Pryor's experience can be distilled into a straightforward framework for other rural communities.

Know your capacity.

Understand water, wastewater, electricity, roads, telecommunications and other infrastructure before considering major development.

Set the rules first.

Establish zoning, setbacks, noise standards, water requirements, infrastructure expectations and other regulations before a specific project arrives.

Require project-specific information.

Do not rely on generic claims about how much water or electricity "data centers" use. Require the actual numbers for the proposed facility.

Understand the fiscal impact.

Evaluate assessed value, tax treatment, exemptions, abatements and the distribution of revenues to schools, counties, cities and other taxing jurisdictions.

Plan for infrastructure costs.

Determine what upgrades are needed and establish who will pay for them.

Consider the broader economic ecosystem.

Look at construction, suppliers, contractors, workforce development, schools, housing, retail and other secondary impacts.

Protect economic diversity.

A data center can be one component of a rural community's industrial strategy without becoming the community's entire economic strategy.

Think long term.

The most significant benefits and challenges may emerge over decades rather than months.

A Rural Case Worth Studying

Pryor is not proof that every rural community should pursue data centers.

It is more useful than that.

It is a real-world example of what happens when a rural community hosts a major data center for more than 15 years—and continues to host it as the facility expands.

The experience shows that large-scale digital infrastructure can coexist with manufacturing, agriculture and other traditional economic activity. It shows that significant water and electricity demands can be managed when adequate capacity exists. It shows that property valuation can have meaningful consequences for local schools. And it shows that infrastructure, zoning and long-term planning matter as much as the project itself.

Perhaps the clearest lesson is this:

Communities do not have to choose between growth and responsible planning. They can establish the conditions under which growth makes sense for their community.

Pryor's experience suggests that the most productive question is not simply whether a community should say "yes" or "no" to a data center.

The better question is:

What would a data center need to look like for it to be a good fit for our community—and what rules, infrastructure and safeguards would make that possible?

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Read More About Pryor Creek, Oklahoma:

- [Southern Economic Development Council: MidAmerica Industrial Park's Long-Term Google Partnership](#)
- [MidAmerica Industrial Park: The Long View on Growth](#)

- [Oklahoma Commerce: Google Planning Another Expansion for Pryor Creek Data Center](#)
- [Lessons Learned from Pryor, OK 15 Years After Google Opened Data Center](#)