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New data center expected to bring 40 jobs to Wise County

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A new state-of-the-art data center is expected to bring 40 jobs to Wise County, officials announced Wednesday.

DP Facilities South will invest \$65 million to construct a Tier III data center in Wise County, Mark Gerard, president of DP Facilities, said in a news release. A news conference was held by Gerard, the Wise County Industrial Development Authority and the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority.

The company has acquired 22 acres in the Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park in Wise, where it will construct the top-level security facility that will allow the company to expand its service offerings and customer base, the release states.

The project, known as Mineral Gap, is a Tier III Uptime Institute certified data center.

The Uptime Institute, an independent advisory organization, ranks data centers by tier, with Tier I being the most basic center, and Tier IV as the most robust. A Tier III data center is concurrently maintainable, allowing for any planned maintenance activity of power and cooling systems to take place without disrupting the operation, according to Uptime.

Gerard described the Mineral Gap facility as one of the most resilient and compromise-free data center sites in Virginia and the East Coast. He said Wise County, known as the “safest place on earth,” will serve to insulate the facility. Natural disasters, blackouts and attacks that are seen in larger population centers are not likely to happen in Wise County, he explained.

“Mineral Gap will provide continuous operational continuity with experts available around the clock, cutting edge technologies, and back-up systems,” Gerard said.

Karen Jackson, secretary of technology in Virginia, said the decision is “great news for Southwest Virginia.”

“Growing the technology-based businesses in the commonwealth and particularly in rural parts of the state, is key to our efforts to build the New Virginia Economy,” Jackson said.

The New Virginia Economy is an effort of Gov. Terry McAuliffe’s administration to reposition the state economy to support more economic growth by increasing private sector jobs.

Wise County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Dana Kilgore thanked DP Facilities for choosing Wise County.

“This project offers tremendous opportunities for additional development and we hope other high-technology companies will recognize, as DP Facilities did, that Wise County is committed to transforming the region into a secure technology corridor,” Kilgore said.

She added: “Abundant broadband fiber, redundant electrical power, and collaboration with the University of Virginia’s College at Wise and Mountain Empire Community College make Wise County an ideal location for any number of strategic partnerships in technology.”

The Virginia Tobacco Commission approved a \$350,000 grant in Tobacco Region Opportunity Funds for the project.

“VCEDA is pleased to congratulate DP Facilities and Wise County on the opening of the Mineral Gap data center,” VCEDA Executive Director Jonathan Belcher said.

Belcher said VCEDA helped the Wise County IDA secure the project by agreeing to allow the land to be provided at no cost.



Tim C. Cox

Carl Snodgrass, economic development director/Wise County IDA executive director, left, and Mark Gerard, president of DP Facilities Inc., talk during the announcement of the new data center in Wise County.