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Iredell one of five counties to form N.C. Data Center Corridor

By [Bethany Fuller](#) | Statesville R&L

Five economic development groups intent on recruiting the next Google and Apple deal joined forces this week in Maiden.

Economic development officials from Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba and Iredell counties unveiled the details around the N.C. Data Center Corridor to a group of site-selection consultants specializing in data center locations.

"It came about as a result of Apple and Google being so closely located," said Scott Millar, executive director of Catawba County Economic Development Corp. "With the two names that we have, we think we have enough energy and momentum in that sector to help provide some opportunities for all of our counties."

With sites available in each of the participating counties, the corridor will provide a recruiting tool, a chance for the counties to share information and develop ready-made sites for these projects, said Greater Statesville Development Corp. Executive Director Mike Smith.

Iredell's position in the corridor is a natural progression from where the data centers have opened in Lenoir and Maiden, Smith said.

The five counties have built a relationship during the past three years by jointly hosting site-selection consultants at the Data Center Information Exchange after the Greater Hickory Classic at Rock Barn golf tournament, Millar said.

"I think it is a huge positive for us as we move forward," Smith said. "We are fortunate to be a part of this cutting edge technological change."

Smith said the Barium Springs Technology Park in Troutman, the Troutman-Lake Norman Business Park, the Boxwood site off U.S. Highway 70 and another off Newton Drive are all promising locations for a data center. The GSDC is still in the process of developing these sites.

Iredell County's access to two separate water sources, reliable and inexpensive power sources and proximity to two major airports makes it a good candidate for one of these projects, Smith said.

"These are the kinds of folks that everyone wants right now," Smith said. "This is kind of the next area of technology that is going to boom."

Large capital projects, like data centers, usually bring in investments around \$100 million or more, Smith said. Considering that the average economic development project brings in a \$5 million investment to the area, the economic impact of a data center is huge.

For the average person, more investments of this size mean Iredell County can continue its tradition of being one of the lowest taxed counties in the state, Smith said.

According to a news release from the Catawba County Economic Development Corp., Site Selection Magazine recently acknowledged the corridor as an emerging data center cluster, and the Data Center Knowledge Web site recently published an article on the clustering of data centers as the "Apple-Google Data Center Corridor." North Carolina was rated highly for low energy cost, favorable labor and fiber optics infrastructure.

As a part of the N.C. Data Center Corridor, the GSDC will be expected to contribute financially for marketing and other incidentals.

By having the corridor branded and displaying a cooperative effort, the five economic development groups can map out sites and help each other land the next deal.

"If I can't land it, I want you to land it because I'll get some benefits out of it," Millar said. "If we get them to look at any one of us, we've added more reason for new data centers to come into the area. The more people who locate here, the more reason for other people to locate here."