Made in Wisconsin: The world's most powerful AI datacenter

Sep 18, 2025 | Brad Smith - Vice Chair & President

In the heart of the American Midwest, a modern marvel is rising. We're in the final phases of building Fairwater, the world's most powerful AI datacenter in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin — part of a region forged by generations of hard work and ingenuity. This facility is more than a technological feat. It's a promise to grow responsibly, invest deeply, and create opportunities for Wisconsin and for the nation.

We are on track to complete construction and bring this AI datacenter online in early 2026, fulfilling our initial $3.3 billion investment pledge. We've already begun hiring full-time employees to support its operation.

And we're not done. Today, we're committing an additional $4 billion to be spent in the next three years to build our second datacenter of similar size and scale — bringing our total investment in Wisconsin to more than $7 billion.

Building the most advanced AI datacenter in the world

Engineered to train the next decade of artificial intelligence, our Mount Pleasant facility will house hundreds of thousands of the world's most powerful NVIDIA GPUs, operating in seamless clusters connected by enough fiber to wrap the planet four times over. These processors will handle training for frontier AI models — delivering ten times the performance of today's fastest supercomputers.

This datacenter is designed to help AI researchers and engineers build the world's most advanced models, test ideas faster, and do it all more efficiently. It's not just about running AI — it's about creating it. This is where the next generation of AI will be trained, setting the stage for breakthroughs that will shape the future. New discoveries in medicine, science, and other critical fields will start right here, with the models we train in Wisconsin.

But what does that mean for the average Wisconsinite? It means new jobs, new skills, and new opportunities — right here at home. From union construction roles to long-term careers in operations and IT, this facility is creating pathways for Wisconsinites to be part of the future of technology. It means students at Gateway Technical College can train for high-demand roles through Wisconsin's first Datacenter Academy. It means local companies — from manufacturers to startups — can partner with Microsoft engineers to turn AI ideas into real solutions.

As someone who spent almost five years as a kid going to school and delivering the morning newspaper by bicycle in Mount Pleasant, this moment means more than just personal nostalgia. It shows that Wisconsin has not just a longstanding and proud industrial past — it's helping define the future of American innovation.

Designed and built for sustainability

What makes this datacenter distinctive isn't just its scale or speed — it's how thoughtfully it's built, with both people and the planet in mind. From day one, sustainability has been central to its design.

More than 90 percent of the facility will rely on a state-of-the-art closed-loop liquid cooling system, filled during construction and recirculated continuously. The remaining portion of the facility will use outside air for cooling, switching to water only on the hottest days, minimizing environmental impact and maximizing operational efficiency. The result is a technological milestone — a datacenter with enough fiber cable to circle the Earth four times, yet its annual water use is modest, requiring roughly the amount of water a typical restaurant uses annually or what an 18-hole golf course consumes weekly in peak summer.

We appreciate that energy prices are increasing across the country and have worked hard to ensure our datacenter will not drive-up costs for our neighbors. That's why we're pre-paying for the energy and electrical infrastructure that we'll use — ensuring prices remain stable and protecting consumers from future cost increases because of our datacenter. We will match every kilowatt hour we consume that comes from a fossil fuel source one for one with carbon-free energy we put back onto the grid. This includes a new 250 MW solar project in Portage County that is under construction to support this commitment. And our partnership with WE Energies ensures we will continually explore and add energy transmission, generation, and usage — under transparent tariffs that support grid reliability.

Our commitment to be a good neighbor in Racine County is one of the reasons we joined forces with Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) to restore prairie and wetland habitats in Racine and Kenosha counties — funding 20 ecological restoration projects, including Cliffside Park along the shores of Lake Michigan, Lamparek Creek in Mount Pleasant, Kirkorian Park in Village of Sturtevant, and Shagbark Restoration Area in Kenosha.

Investing in people

This facility is a catalyst for economic opportunity. At its peak, we have employed more than 3,000 construction workers during daily peak activity, including electricians, plumbers and pipefitters, carpenters, structural iron and steel workers, concrete workers, and Earth movers. Once our first datacenter is fully operational, we will employ around 500 full-time employees, with that number growing to around 800 once the second datacenter is complete.

We are committed to Wisconsin and other communities that host our cutting-edge datacenters, creating hubs for AI innovation where local businesses, nonprofits, students, and workers can all benefit from the growing AI economy. That's why we partnered in Racine with Gateway Technical College to launch Wisconsin's first Datacenter Academy, training more than 1,000 students in five years for high-demand datacenter roles. Across the state, Microsoft and more than 40 partners like the United Way, the

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University of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Technical College System have worked together and with Gener8tor to train 114,000 people in AI — including 1,400 people living in Racine County.

We've also sponsored and helped to open the nation's first manufacturing-focused AI Co-Innovation Lab on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. It results from a partnership with UW-Milwaukee, WEDC, Gateway Technical College, and TitletownTech (a partnership between Microsoft and the Green Bay Packers). The lab has already helped 23 Wisconsin companies — including Regal Rexnord, Renaissant, and BW Converting — turn AI ideas into real solutions. A few of these companies are headquartered right in Racine County, like Wiscon Products, a family-owned precision machining company founded in 1945.

Finally, to help more Wisconsinites access the world's most advanced technology being built in their home state, we've expanded broadband access to more than 9,300 rural residents and delivered next-generation service to 1,200 homes and businesses in Sturtevant — bringing faster, more reliable internet to the places where people live, work, and learn.

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Mount Pleasant isn't just becoming a hub for AI — it's becoming a blueprint for how innovation can serve everyone. We're not just investing in an AI datacenter; we are investing in a community. And we are investing in a powerful idea: that innovation is for everyone, and that we can build the future together — with care for people, place, and planet.

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