We are just in the window where companies could make a decision,” said Roger Lee, executive director of Economic Development for Central Oregon.

Central Oregon’s ability to keep up its developing reputation as a data center hub will depend on whether its power, fiber optic lines and water systems can support the burgeoning industry.

Former Crook County Judge Scott Cooper said Apple’s decision to build a data center, the second after Facebook, was a turning point. “One is an experiment. Two is a cluster, and that’s a really big difference,” Cooper said. “Now the concern is how do we get that balance between new industry and infrastructure support?”

People interviewed about the primary resources and infrastructure used by data centers said Prineville has enough power, fiber optic connectivity and water to support the industry in the foreseeable future.

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**Growing power demand**

Facebook’s Prineville Data Center already is drawing about 20 megawatts of power, enough for 14,600 Northwest homes, according to economic development and power officials. Apple’s planned data center and a planned data center code-named Jasper could be drawing another 80 megawatts, or enough power for 58,400 Northwest homes, by January 2022.

Here’s a look at the expected power growth, in megawatts, of the two new data centers.

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Source: Central Electric Cooperative

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**The next big thing in Central Oregon?** The region’s ability to keep up as it builds a reputation for hosting data centers depends on infrastructure, and officials say Prineville is well-positioned.**

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**Data Central**

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**Photos by Rob Kerr / The Bulletin**

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**By Hillary Borrud, Dylan Darling and Duffie Taylor**

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**PRINEVILLE —**

Facebook’s data center in Prineville is up and running, with a twin being built next door.

Apple has plans to open a small data center nearby, and has plenty of room to grow on the 160 acres it bought from the city of Prineville for $8.6 million in February.

Another data center — code-named Jasper — is in the works, though power utility and economic development officials will not say what company is behind it. Still more data centers are rumored.

“We are just in the window where companies could make a decision,” said Roger Lee, executive director of Economic Development for Central Oregon.

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**Power hungry**

As hives of computers, data centers use tremendous amounts of electricity.

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Source: Central Electric Cooperative
In March, Facebook's wastewater discharge was 10,390,000 gallons per day. But the company paid 0.008% of its total water use for its wastewater treatment services. It's an opportunity cost that Facebook could save by focusing on water conservation and efficiency. The company has committed to using 100% renewable energy by 2020, and has already made significant progress toward that goal. In 2017, Facebook used 12% renewable energy, and by 2018, that number had increased to 30%. This is a clear indication of the company's commitment to sustainability and reducing its environmental impact. As Facebook continues to grow and expand, it is likely to face increasing pressure to reduce its water use and carbon footprint. The company has already taken steps to conserve water, such as optimizing its data centers and reducing water consumption in its buildings. However, there is still room for improvement, and Facebook has the potential to save even more water and reduce its environmental impact if it continues to prioritize sustainability. Continued on next page
Last summer the company and Prineville conducted a study to assess whether the data center could use recycled wastewater for its cooling and heating operations. Only about a mile separates Facebook from the city's wastewater treatment plant, making infrastructure between the sites feasible, and treated wastewater could serve as an effective replacement for the groundwater that currently heats and cools the computer servers, Klann said. The move could save the company money, preserve the city’s fragile water supply and advance both entities to a new level of energy efficiency, he said. The study estimated the costs for such a project to be between $3.7 and $5.8 million, but both Klann and Weinstein say many steps and studies remain before such a plan could go forward.

“Facebook is partnering with the city to look at options, but as an option it’s several years out at least,” Weinstein said. Meanwhile the two have discussed other conservation ideas, like how the city could harness the data center’s generated heat for the purposes of a greenhouse or something else. Regardless, City Councilor Steve Uffelman said, the partnership between Facebook and Prineville hints at what is possible when governments and businesses work together for mutual benefit.

“We both want to be as efficient as we can utilizing the resources that we have,” said Uffelman. “Turning liabilities into assets could be a real selling feature for Prineville.”

— Reporter: 541-637-7623

Rob Kerr / The Bulletin

McKenzie Cascade Excavation employees work near a recently buried fiber optic cable Friday along state Highway 126 near Prineville. It’s part of a $4.4 million federal stimulus project awarded to BendBroadband to build 130 miles of fiber optic connections from Madras to La Pine, from Bend to Prineville and several other points. In the background are Facebook’s first data center and its twin, which is under construction.