

County server farm takes step forward



Written by Gina Lindsey (O-N-E Staff Reporter)

Is Catawba County the next Research Triangle Park? The Economic Development Corporation is hoping to do just that with a data center near Newton. EDC President Scott Millar said they have an option on 184.5 acres off U.S. 321 and Startown Road at a cost of \$35,000 per acre — for a total of \$6.5 million. The “option” secures the price.

The site is currently called the Greater Hickory Corporate Campus, which will be a multi-jurisdictional data center campus. All eight county municipalities can participate as much or as little as they want. “We’ve drawn it up as four data centers,” Millar said. “It could consist of multiple centers or one large campus.”

The EDC identified data centers and server farms as a target market for the county, Millar said. In May he said data centers produce high wage jobs in a high growth industry. “The recent location of Google in our neighboring county proves that our area is attractive to data centers,” he said.

The EDC looked at multiple sites throughout the county for the ideal location for such a site. Many were located in southwest portion of the county. “Catawba County is ideally suited for the location of data centers and server farms due to the abundant, low cost and reliable electricity, water and fiber, not to mention a location that insulates us from disasters,” Millar said. The close proximity to the Hickory and Charlotte airports also made the location favorable.

He said the next step is to find a company willing to build a facility on the site. Millar said he has several interested companies in the technology industry interested in the area for a facility. He spoke with several corporate clients during the Greater Hickory Classic. Millar used the event to show clients the marketing potential of Catawba County.

“I wouldn’t say there are any that are signing yet,” he said. “This can certainly take a while. Certainly we feel the pressure to secure someone.” Millar said it may take a few months to a few years to find a company to move into the area. Until they find a company that will commit to locating their project at the site, the project cannot move forward.

Newton City Manager Todd Clark said he has been attending meetings about the data park on a regular basis. He said although Newton is interested in the opportunities that would be available there, it is not among the city’s top priorities. “We are still determining what the costs would be (of participation) and if it would be in the best interest of the tax payers,” he said.

Automation by **TeachMeJoomla**

Close Window