

# Atlantic City Data Center comes with great economic potential

FLYNN ALTOMARE For the Press

ATLANTIC CITY — A new data center at the Atlantic City Convention Center could provide the city with new jobs and help diversify its economy.

Last year, the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority unanimously approved Continent 8, a British network solutions and data center provider, for a 10-year lease that will net the authority \$101,000 annually in rent.

Officials hope the data center will attract various types of companies to Atlantic City, which could create a shift from relying on revenue from gaming. The facility will become operational this coming week, officials said.

“We celebrate investments in our own backyards, yet at the same time connect to the world,” said Continent 8 CEO Michael Tobin during a recent event at the Convention Center. “We want to attract world-class companies to create jobs and link Atlantic City to the rest of the world.”

Tobin described the Atlantic City Data Center as a backbone, something that would be invisible to the public while offering support as the most stable electrical center in Atlantic City.

For safety reasons, officials would not reveal the specific location of the data center within the Convention Center.

“People don’t know this is here, and that’s exactly the purpose,” he said.

Continent 8 already operates smaller spaces, referred to as data rooms, in Caesars Atlantic City and Ocean Casino Resort used for transactions related to online gaming.

Large data centers house servers that transport internet traffic through a connected network and allow users to collect, store, process, distribute and access large amounts of data. The data centers provide users with enhanced security, increased connectivity and prevent loss of service through backup power supplies, qualities that are attractive to any company with customer data transactions.

In addition to increasing capacity in New Jersey, the new data center will include connectivity to Mississippi, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia locations, as well as provide a secure data redundancy and disaster recovery facility from which to host online gaming operators’ most critical operations.

Tobin hopes that schools, hospitals, casinos and other industries will want to move their equipment into the data center, which could end up serving as a "central office for communications for Atlantic City."

The nearly 6,000-square-foot data center has been touted as a stimulus for economic opportunity for the region. Barbara DeMarco, vice president of Porzio Governmental Affairs and the New Jersey consultant for Continent 8, called it a “wonderful thing to bring to Atlantic City.”

The new facility will offer faster internet speeds, better data security, greater internet reliability and an overall more technologically advanced way of connecting the residents of Atlantic City and beyond, she said.

State Sen. Chris Brown, R-Atlantic, is confident the positive impact the data center will have on the esports industry will lead to more jobs in other fields.

“Esports opens the door to construction jobs, hospitality jobs, college jobs and, thanks to our sports betting law, more gaming revenue,” Brown said.

Marshall Spevak, deputy executive director of the CRDA, spoke about the advantages businesses choosing to operate in Atlantic City will now have over their competitors.

“Any business needs secure reliable technological infrastructure,” Spevak said. “There’s nothing like this in South Jersey.”

Atlantic City companies will now have “peace of mind in the online space, and will know their data and work product is protected,” Spevak said.

Tobin, asked whether users should be concerned about the potential for power outages, called the center “physically very secure and technologically advanced.”

“We probably will never go down,” said Tobin. “Power will not be an issue.”

Tobin said Continent 8 was “looking forward to being a major part of Atlantic City’s future.”

“I never placed a bet in my life, but I placed one on A.C., and I think it’s gonna pay off big time,” he said.

*Staff Writer David Danzis contributed to this report.*