

Alabama Industrial Site Ready for Development

A site in the Florence-Lauderdale Industrial Park is ready for development if a data center industry comes calling, according to a Tennessee Valley Authority study. The Florence Advantage Site is among 16 in the Tennessee Valley to receive Primary Data Center designation from the TVA economic development study, according to a news release from the Shoals Economic Development Authority.

TVA and Chicago-based Deloitte Consulting conducted the study, which evaluates accessibility, telecommunications infrastructure and availability of reliable electric power, SEDA officials said.

"This ready-for-development designation gives our community a competitive edge when the next data center project seeks an optimal site," SEDA President Forrest Wright said. "We thank TVA for the opportunity to participate in this valuable program and our community for their diligence in reaching this milestone to compete for new businesses," he said.

More than 50 sites in the seven-state TVA service area were assessed for capacity to accommodate a data center, officials said. Data centers house computer systems and components for Internet search-engine companies, financial transaction processors and other high-tech industries. Thus far, TVA has designated 16 sites as ready for development, including the Florence Advantage Site on Parkway Drive.

Two other Alabama sites earned the designation — one at Thompson Road along I-65 in Hartselle, and the other at 2000 Conners Island Parkway, in Guntersville, per the TVA website tvaed.com/datacenters.

John Bradley, senior vice president of TVA Economic Development, said there is an increasing demand for data centers in the United States. "TVA's economic development role to help communities be prepared to recruit data centers and other companies to our region is extremely important," Bradley said. "The data center industry is growing rapidly and typically represents large investments in communities and provides good-paying job opportunities."