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Yahoo! locates in Greater Omaha for multiple reasons

When Yahoo! executives scoured the country for a large data center location, Greater Omaha stood out as the location of choice for a variety of reasons. "Low power costs, low real estate costs, plenty of bandwidth, a productive workforce and the quality of life all made Omaha the preferred location for this data center," said Scott Noteboom, director of data center engineering and operations for Yahoo! "And being located right in the center of the country allows us to serve customers and other Yahoo! data centers on either coast quickly and efficiently."

The Yahoo! data center in Omaha is more than 100,000 square feet. When fully deployed, it will have over one hundred thousand computers delivering Yahoo! services from e-mail to front page and everything in between. This facility will also serve as a central repository for integrating and dispatching servers and infrastructure to other Yahoo! data centers across the country.

"From an infrastructure standpoint," added Noteboom, "we look for high-bandwidth, multi-path network capacity that meets our high-performance, low-millisecond thresholds for communication to both centralized Internet POPs (points of presence) and Yahoo! users throughout the region. In this respect, Omaha stood out as the lead mid-U.S. contender to meet our requirements.

"In the mid-1990s places like Omaha were considered tier two cities from an Internet perspective. Then, during the technology boom, there was an infrastructure build-out with billions of dollars spent on laying fiber across the country. A lot of that fiber ended up going right through Omaha. That's what helped turn Omaha into a core Internet city."

But it's more than a good infrastructure that makes Greater Omaha a desirable location for data center operations. The employment base and quality of life also differentiate this region from other parts of the country.

"One thing that surprised me about Omaha was the higher productivity of the workforce – even compared to my hometown in the Silicon Valley," Noteboom stated. "I attribute that to the quality of life. It's an affordable place to live. People can buy a house, raise a family and do all the things they look for in life with less stress; and the entertainment and cultural opportunities are top-notch.

"On this particular project, we employed more than 300 local construction workers across multiple trades and have seen the highest productivity that we've ever experienced during a data center project. I think that's a great sign of the things to come in Omaha."

When Yahoo! looks for a data center market, they begin by looking at just about every state in the country. The strong support from the Greater Omaha Chamber, state and local economic development teams as well as government and private organizations played a huge role in the decision to locate in Omaha. These are the people who helped Yahoo! understand the state, the workforce, the power, the real estate, the tax incentives and all the advantages Greater Omaha offers.

"One thing I'll always remember about Omaha," recalled Noteboom, "is a time when we were working through a couple challenges. A couple of us were at the airport getting ready to leave and we got a phone call from the governor of Nebraska. I was really impressed with that. It felt very positive to get that kind of attention. From then on, whenever we had a question, we had the governor's cell phone number if we needed it.

"In a nutshell, Greater Omaha meets all our big city needs, yet still has a strong community vibe to it. It's hard to describe. There's just a very intimate and caring feeling and quality about this area that's very real. That really makes a difference."