



FedEx opens new data center in Springs

[WAYNE HEILMAN](#)

2011-02-16 14:18:17



After seven years of planning and construction, [FedEx](#) opened a corporate data center Wednesday in the Northgate business park that will replace a nearly 30-year-old similar facility near its corporate headquarters in Memphis, Tenn.

Construction began in 2006 and was completed two years later on the 140,000-square-foot building southwest of Voyager Parkway and North Gate Boulevard. But the company's Enterprise Data Center-West won't be in full operation until late 2013 as equipment is installed, tested and put into operation and both software applications and data are moved onto thousands of servers the center will house, said Kevin Humphries, senior vice president of information technology for FedEx Services.

"This facility in the long term will replace our corporate technology center in Memphis," said [Rob Carter](#), chief information officer of FedEx; Carter began his career with the package shipping giant 18 years ago in its software development operation that shares a campus with the new data center.

"This will become our primary data center and will represent 40 percent of our overall computing capacity," Carter said. "We have made a significant investment this facility. It will be one of our largest data centers for years to come."

The new center, first built to replace a smaller, aging facility in the Rockrimmon area that opened in the early 1980s, was designed to be among the most energy-efficient data centers — using about one-third less power than the average data center. The facility will have plenty of room for expansion when it begins operation, leaving an entire floor available with a capacity to house about 3,000 servers at full capacity that operate the company's package-tracking, billing, aviation planning and other systems.

"This has been an important location for us for 30 years, and this facility is a continuation of the wonderful relationship we have had with a wonderful community. The next few years will be even more so," said FedEx founder and CEO [Fred Smith](#), recalling his visit to break ground for the previous facility in 1981. The company sold that 63,180-square-foot facility last year for \$1.8 million to a limited liability company set up by Castle Rock commercial real estate investor Daniel Gerken.

FedEx has applied for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design ([LEED](#)) certification, the benchmark for so-called "green" buildings, for the data center. The building is designed to use outside air to cool the data center more than 200 days a year and includes an elaborate system to move the heat generated by its servers through an extensive ventilation system into the atmosphere.

During construction, more than 75 percent of the construction waste from the project was diverted from landfills and nearly 11 percent of the building materials were extracted or regionally produced while another 14 percent contained recycled materials. At capacity, the data center will use about 8 megawatts of power, or less than 1 percent of the overall capacity of [Colorado Springs Utilities](#) and less than one-fifth of the projected power consumption of Hewlett-Packard's larger data center on Rockrimmon Boulevard.

The center is served by Springs Utilities' substations in the Interquest business park and the nearby Flying Horse development and has fiber optic connections to the company's Memphis data center through both Sprint Nextel Corp. and tw telecom inc. In the event of a power failure, the data center can be operated for

nine minutes using 1,980 batteries capable of supplying 15 megawatts of power until switching over to generators that have enough fuel on site to run continuously for two days before refueling.

About 30 of the 550 employees at the FedEx campus in Northgate work in the data center; the rest work in the software operation. Another 450 FedEx employees work in its package shipping, freight and copy and printing operations spread across seven other locations in the Colorado Springs area. The local software operation is best known for developing the company's first-of-its-kind package tracking software and handheld scanning devices that have since become commonplace in the shipping and related industries.

© Copyright 2011 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)