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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Local, Regional and State Partners Collaborate to Secure \$3.6 Billion AI Factory Campus in Central Louisiana

**BOYCE, La.** — (May 28, 2026) – Local, regional, and state partners are being recognized for their collaboration and leadership in helping secure one of the most transformative economic development projects in Louisiana history as Applied Digital Corporation (NASDAQ: APLD) announced plans to develop a \$3.6 billion, state-of-the-art artificial intelligence (AI) factory campus in Rapides Parish. The campus, known as Delta Forge 1, represents the most significant economic development project in the history of Central Louisiana and marks a defining milestone in the region's growth and competitiveness in the global digital economy.

The development is projected to generate approximately \$575.5 million in local tax revenue over the life of the project, supporting schools, public safety, infrastructure, and essential community services throughout Rapides Parish.

"We have the resources, workforce, and determination to support this project," said Danny Bordelon, Rapides Parish Police Juror for District E. "This investment creates opportunities not only for today's residents, but for future generations who want to build careers and lives here. It sends a message that our region's future is bright and that our communities are ready for growth."

"We welcome a project of this scale and significance to Rapides Parish," said Craig Smith, President of the Rapides Parish Police Jury. "This represents the kind of forward-looking investment that creates high-paying jobs, expands our tax base, and strengthens the future for our families. It is a testament to what can happen when local, regional, and state partners work together toward a common vision."

Rapides Parish Sheriff Mark Wood emphasized the broader community impact the project will have throughout the region.

"This is a great opportunity for Central Louisiana, and Rapides Parish deserves continued positive growth and the kind of good-paying jobs that help keep families here at home," said Sheriff Mark Wood. "At the same time, my focus as Sheriff remains on the citizens who live and work here every day and the taxpayers who continue supporting our schools, law enforcement, and local government. The Sheriff's Office will continue providing the services and protection our citizens and small businesses depend on every day. Our mission remains the same — to serve the people of this parish and help keep our communities as safe as possible."

Rapides Parish School Board Superintendent Jeff Powell highlighted the importance of workforce preparation and educational partnerships connected to the investment.

"This creates incredible opportunities for our students and future workforce," Powell said. "The careers associated with advanced technology, engineering, and digital infrastructure will require strong partnerships between education and industry. The significant revenue generated through this investment also has the potential to strengthen Rapides Parish schools through improvements to facilities, technology, career and technical education programs, teacher support, and expanded opportunities that directly benefit students across our parish."

Cleco will provide power to support the AI factory campus, representing the most substantial economic development project in the company's history.

"This is the largest economic development opportunity in Cleco's 90-plus year history and reflects the region's growing competitive position for major infrastructure and technology investments," Cleco President and CEO Bill Fontenot said. "This investment reflects the potential that many of us here in Central Louisiana have long known existed, and we see it as the beginning of even greater possibilities for our region. Cleco is proud to support transformative investments, like the data center project, that deliver meaningful economic impact while maintaining the affordability, reliability and value our customers expect and deserve."

Site development on the campus began in January 2026, with initial operations expected to begin in mid-2027.

Applied Digital qualified for Louisiana's state and local sales and use tax exemption on qualifying purchases or leases of data center equipment established under Act 730 of the 2024 Louisiana Legislative Session. The company has also entered into a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) agreement with the England Economic & Industrial Development District.

"The Delta Forge 1 investment is a defining moment not only for Central Louisiana, but for the continued evolution of England Airpark as a driver of innovation and opportunity," said Ralph Hennessy, Executive Director of England Economic & Industrial Development District. "This project represents the type of economic progress we were built to attract."

Governor Jeff Landry, Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Susan Bourgeois, Louisiana Central President and CEO Chris Masingill, and England Economic Industrial & Development District leadership — a key regional partner in securing the investment — formally announced the project alongside state and local leaders at a press conference on May 26 in Rapides Parish.

The Delta Forge 1 campus will establish Applied Digital's first Louisiana location, which is purpose-built to support large-scale artificial intelligence training, cloud computing, and high-performance computing workloads utilizing Applied Digital's proprietary closed-loop cooling technology.

The project is expected to create more than 1,000 construction jobs at peak construction and 200 direct permanent jobs with salaries averaging approximately 150% of the state average wage. LED estimates the project will also generate an additional 218 indirect jobs, generating more 1,400 new employment opportunities in Central.

"Louisiana is leading America's industrial renaissance while staying committed to the principles outlined in President Trump's Ratepayer Protection Pledge, protecting reliability, affordability and the long-term interests of consumers," Governor Jeff Landry said. "Global companies are choosing Louisiana because they see a state where every region is prepared to deliver at scale, with the infrastructure, workforce and leadership needed to support the technologies and industries shaping the future economy."

The \$3.6 billion investment builds upon unprecedented economic momentum across Louisiana, including more than \$110 billion in capital investment announcements and nearly 80,000 new job opportunities secured statewide since 2024.

"Today, Louisiana is competing differently. With stronger alignment, greater speed and a clear focus, we are seeing unprecedented momentum and growth reach every region of our state," LED Secretary Susan B. Bourgeois said. "This announcement reinforces that global technology companies see Louisiana as a place where they can expand, scale and invest with confidence while creating meaningful outcomes for our people and communities."

"This project has the potential to be one of the most transformational in the history of Rapides Parish, surpassing even the major industrial investments of the 1950s and 60s," Louisiana Central President and CEO Chris Masingill said. "In both scale and impact, this positions Central Louisiana to compete for major economic opportunities in ways we haven't seen in generations. This is about creating opportunities for our people, strengthening our communities, and ensuring this region plays a leading role in the future economy."

Applied Digital Chairman and CEO Wes Cummins said Central Louisiana's people, infrastructure, and long-term vision made the region an ideal fit for the company's continued expansion.

"Central Louisiana is exactly the kind of community we had in mind when we set out to build Applied Digital — a region with strong roots, abundant potential, and people who understand the value of long-term investment," Cummins said. "We're honored to bring Delta Forge 1 to Rapides Parish, and we are committed to being a supportive, engaged partner in this community for the long haul. Our hope is that this campus becomes a source of opportunity and pride for the people of Central Louisiana for generations to come."

Local businesses, make sure you're in the pipeline for contract and vendor opportunities with development projects like Applied Digital and more across the state by registering on [SourceLouisiana.com](https://SourceLouisiana.com).



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#### About Louisiana Central

Louisiana Central is the economic development organization for the 10-parish Central Louisiana region dedicated to fostering growth and prosperity. Through strategic partnerships and initiatives, Louisiana Central works to attract new businesses, support existing industries, and enhance the region's overall economic vitality.