

Dallas Energy Finance Breakfast Hosted by Haynes Boone Highlights Texas' Data Center Boom

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PRACTICES Energy, Power and Natural Resources, Oil and Gas

Haynes Boone hosted another edition of its Dallas Energy Finance Breakfast on April 8, part of a yearslong series of industry breakfast events that consistently draw 100-plus attendees from across the Texas energy sector. This most recent discussion brought together leaders shaping the data center and energy landscape:

- [Stephen Friedberg](#), Partner, Haynes Boone, Data Center & Digital Infrastructure Practice Group
- [Jacobo Ortiz Blanes](#), Chief Operating Officer, Fermi America
- [Corey Welp](#), Chief Investment Officer, Managing Partner & Co-Founder, fifteenfortyseven Critical Systems Realty (1547)
- [Mike Freeman](#) (Moderator), Partner, Haynes Boone, Energy Practice Group

The conversation underscored how Texas is uniquely positioned for the growing demand in data center infrastructure, thanks to abundant land, water, natural gas and a business-friendly environment. Panelists highlighted the following:

- **Data Center Scale is Expanding Rapidly:** Projects are moving from tens of megawatts to gigawatt-scale developments, creating new financing and operational challenges. Large-scale deals now often require custom project financing and capital structures, as traditional methods are insufficient.
- **Power and Water Considerations are Central:** Modern data centers need water-cooling systems, not just air-cooling, raising public concerns about utility bills and local resource use. Some operators are building private utilities to ensure reliable, high-capacity power.
- **Texas Advantages:** With access to gas infrastructure, water from the Ogallala Aquifer and pro-business policies, Texas is attracting large-scale developments. Projects like [Fermi America's 5,800-acre energy campus](#) exemplify the state's potential for private utility creation and integrated infrastructure.
- **Public Engagement is Increasingly Important:** Local pushback over water and electricity usage is shaping project planning. Developers are addressing concerns through education and innovative technologies, including closed-loop water systems and diversified energy portfolios.
- **AI and Inference Phase:** Large language models and other artificial intelligence applications are driving unprecedented demand for data centers, requiring not just storage but real-time computational capacity distributed across multiple locations.

Friedberg explained that financing needs have grown exponentially, as many developers are now building their own power plants or using project financing to support hyperscale facilities.

Welp advised that companies should focus on front-of-the-meter projects with existing infrastructure, emphasizing the importance of proximity to population centers and the operational complexity of large AI-driven facilities.

Ortiz Blanes highlighted the integration of energy, water and fiber infrastructure in Texas, building industrial-scale complexes that function like private utilities to meet the demands of modern data centers.

As the sector continues to grow, collaboration between private operators and utilities – along with strategic site selection and innovative energy solutions – will be critical to supporting the next generation of data infrastructure.

Haynes Boone continues to lead the conversation on energy and infrastructure across the country, hosting regular forums that bring together industry leaders and experts. The firm's Dallas office has organized over 10 Energy Finance Breakfasts with co-sponsors Netherland Sewell & Associates, Inc., PGIM Private Capital and Baker Tilly, while the Denver office hosts monthly Denver Energy Finance Discussion Group meetings with co-sponsor Baker Tilly. These events provide insight and dialogue on the trends shaping the energy sector.

For more information about the Dallas Energy Finance Breakfasts, please contact [Camie McKee](#). For more information about the Denver Energy Finance Discussion Group meetings, please contact [Chris Reagen](#).

Haynes Boone's market-leading [Energy Practice Group](#) has a strong presence across key global energy hubs, including London, Mexico City and the United States. The group advises clients across the full oil and gas value chain, from upstream exploration and production to midstream and downstream operations, as well as in energy transition sectors such as carbon capture, wind, solar and battery storage. The group offers deep experience in capital markets, project finance, regulatory matters, litigation, M&A and restructuring. The practice is ranked nationally by Chambers and Partners, with several partners also ranked for their service within the energy sector.