HEARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS DISCUSSION
September 8, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.

The Heard County Board of Commissioners held a discussion on September 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chamber of the Heard County Administration Building. In attendance at the meeting were Chairman Tracy McCormick, District 1 Commissioner Curtis Mock, District 2 Commissioner James Perry, District 3 Commissioner Iris Harris, District 4 Commissioner Larry Hammond, and District 5 Commissioner David Walls.

Chairman McCormick stated that this discussion was called to gather public input and discuss the development of a Data Center Ordinance for Heard County. Officials emphasized that no data center applications have been submitted to the county and that the purpose of the meeting was to proactively establish regulations and guidelines before any future proposals are received. The existing moratorium remains in effect, providing additional time for the county and residents to develop an ordinance.

The meeting opened with a prayer from Commissioner Mock. The Chairman asked attendees to remember the families of Mike Nolley and Frankie Knowles in their prayers and encouraged respectful discussion throughout the work session. Citizens were invited to present information and recommendations regarding potential data center development and ordinance considerations.

Several residents expressed concerns about the potential impacts of large-scale data centers on Heard County. Discussion centered on electrical demand and power infrastructure requirements, water consumption associated with hyperscale data centers, transparency of agreements between developers, utilities, and local governments, and the potential use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). Residents also raised concerns regarding environmental impacts on groundwater, surface water, wildlife, and the county's rural character, as well as long-term community impacts from industrial development. Additional concerns included noise generated by data center operations,

utility prioritization during droughts or power shortages, and the extent of local control once significant utility infrastructure is established.

A presentation by citizen Len Savage included references to reports, environmental concerns, and examples of data center development occurring in neighboring counties.

Significant discussion focused on water usage by large data centers. Speakers cited examples of proposed facilities in neighboring communities that could require millions of gallons of water per day for cooling operations. Residents expressed concerns regarding Heard County's existing water capacity and infrastructure limitations, ongoing drought conditions and conservation efforts, potential impacts to residential water availability, and the need to preserve priority access to water resources during shortages. Concerns were also raised regarding the use of potable water supplies for industrial cooling purposes. Several speakers emphasized that county residents should remain the priority users of local water resources.

Citizens raised concerns regarding possible environmental and health effects associated with data center development. Topics discussed included noise and vibration generated by data center operations, potential impacts on wildlife, hunting areas, and protected species, air quality concerns, groundwater protection, industrial chemical use in cooling systems, and long-term waste disposal and decommissioning issues. Several speakers emphasized the importance of careful review and strong regulatory protections before permitting any future projects.

Residents offered numerous suggestions for incorporation into a future ordinance. Recommendations included prohibiting non-disclosure agreements related to data center projects and prohibiting the use of eminent domain for data centers and associated utility infrastructure. Additional recommendations included requiring infrastructure corridors and property acquisitions to be secured prior to project approval, limiting data center development to existing industrial areas such as Plant Wansley,

requiring substantial financial assurances and bonding requirements, and establishing strong decommissioning requirements.

Speakers also recommended ensuring ordinance requirements remain enforceable if ownership of a facility changes, protecting residential access to water and electric service, establishing accountability measures for ordinance violations, and requiring transparency throughout the development process.

County officials thanked residents for their participation and input. The Chairman acknowledged the extensive research and draft ordinance materials submitted by citizens and stated that many of the recommendations were being considered as part of the county's ordinance development process. Officials noted that key points raised during the meeting were being documented for future ordinance discussions.

The Board announced that an additional work session on the proposed Data Center Ordinance would be held on September 22, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. Citizens were encouraged to continue participating and providing new information and recommendations as the ordinance development process continues.

The Chairman thanked attendees for their involvement and reaffirmed the Board's commitment to representing the interests of Heard County residents. Additional prayers were requested for the families of Don Hurd, Mike Nolley, and Frankie Knowles.

The work session ended with no official action being taken.

End time 6:45 p.m.

Katrina Billingsley

County Clerk

Date 10/20/2026

Chairman