US Data Center Daily Briefing

May 07, 2026

KEY THEMES

- NVIDIA $500m Corning deal for US fiber plants
- AEP $78bn plan targets 63GW load by 2030
- IEA: data centre electricity up 17% in 2025
- Gartner: switches +15–40% as AI builds soak supply

NVIDIA just put real money behind a bottleneck everyone in AI infrastructure feels: optics. Its $500 million investment in Corning to fund three new US fiber plants lands as the IEA says global data centre electricity use jumped 17% in 2025—and power, grid, and network constraints are now moving in lockstep. The common thread is simple: “AI demand” isn’t a slogan anymore; it’s rewriting the supply chain, the grid capex plan, and the procurement calendar.

The Big Stories

NVIDIA invests $500M in Corning, three US fiber plants is the day’s clearest tell that the AI buildout is dragging upstream manufacturing along with it. NVIDIA is putting $500m into Corning and secured rights to buy $2.7bn more in stock, backing three new fiber plants in North Carolina and Texas. Corning says the move boosts optical manufacturing tenfold, lifts domestic fiber capacity by 50%+, creates 3,000+ jobs, and it’s now guiding to $20bn revenue by 2026 and $35bn by 2030. For investors, this looks less like “supplier support” and more like a strategic hedge: if the network becomes the limiting reagent, NVIDIA doesn’t want to be waiting in the same queue as everyone else.

IEA: AI drives global data centre electricity demand surge puts hard numbers on the power side. The IEA says AI-driven demand pushed global data centre electricity use up 17% in 2025, with demand forecast to double by 2030 while AI-focused centres could triple. It also notes five large tech companies spent $400bn+ on capex in 2025 (with a projected +75% in 2026), and that conditional SMR offtake agreements rose from 25GW at end-2024 to 45GW “today.” The important signal here isn’t just growth—it’s the shift in what counts as “infrastructure”: nuclear offtakes and grid access are becoming part of the data centre toolkit.

AEP reports Q1 2026 earnings, expands $78bn capital plan shows a utility openly planning around load that looks a lot like data centres. American Electric Power booked 7GW of new

load agreements in Q1 and says it expects incremental load of 63GW by 2030—41GW of that in AEP Texas. It raised its five-year capital plan to $78bn, including $33bn for transmission and new 765kV lines across SPP and PJM. Read this as the grid's version of "capacity expansion": the utilities that can permit, finance, and build transmission fastest are quietly becoming the gatekeepers of AI geography.

Switch vendors prioritize AI infrastructure, straining enterprise supply is the networking echo of the same trend. Gartner says vendors are reallocating engineering and physical resources to AI data centres, with switch price increases of 15–40% and lead times stretching 3–9 months; Cisco, Arista, and Juniper are cited among those prioritising AI buildouts. The near-term implication is procurement pain, but the longer-term one is more structural: "enterprise" and "general-purpose" data centre refresh cycles may be forced onto a slower cadence as the vendor roadmap and factory time get pulled toward hyperscale AI.

CleanMax to supply hybrid solar-wind to Iron Mountain data centres is a reminder that the power story isn't only about megawatts—it's about firming a decarbonisation posture while demand rises. CleanMax will supply around 32 million units annually of hybrid solar and wind power to Iron Mountain's Mumbai, Pune, and Bengaluru data centres under a long-term group captive agreement, lifting Iron Mountain's renewable share in India to as much as 75% and supporting its 24/7 carbon-free energy target by 2040. This kind of deal matters because it's replicable: it's a template operators can use to keep new capacity palatable to regulators, communities, and customers even as absolute consumption climbs.

Behind the Headlines

CERC proposes relief for stalled RE projects; auction unused connectivity is worth watching because transmission access is turning into a tradable asset in all but name. India's regulator is proposing a one-time relief mechanism that would let stalled renewable developers retain, repurpose, or surrender interstate transmission connectivity via three pathways (including a fresh performance bank guarantee of Rs 10 lakh per MW or replacement PPAs). It also proposes auction-based allocation of surrendered connectivity with a base price of Rs 3 lakh per MW and commissioning timelines of 12–24 months, with consultation open until May 15. If this moves forward, it's a quiet but meaningful step toward making grid access more liquid—exactly what fast-moving data centre and AI demand needs when power availability is the binding constraint.

Moment Energy raises US$40M Series B to expand factory is a small headline with a big subtext: the industry is hunting for storage that can be built fast, at scale, and without waiting

on perfect supply chains. Moment raised $40m Series B led by Evok Innovations (announced May 5), taking total capital raised to $100m+, to expand North American manufacturing and scale its second-life battery factory to support deployment of its Luna BESS systems. Second-life batteries won't solve every performance or warranty requirement, but the financing shows demand for "good-enough" storage solutions is rising alongside data centre power buildouts. The strategic angle: storage manufacturing capacity—and not just generation—will increasingly shape which markets can add load without breaking reliability.

EESI: Data Center Waste Heat, PFAS, and Policy Updates flags the next wave of scrutiny around what data centres consume and what they might leak. EESI's newsletter highlights reuse of data centre waste heat, concerns about PFAS in data centre components, and reviews 65 climate-related hearings held in March–April 2026. It will also co-host a May 7 briefing with American Rivers on US water infrastructure challenges, including the January 2026 Potomac sewer collapse that spilled 200 million gallons into the Potomac River. The bigger point: as AI pushes power and water needs higher, the policy conversation is widening beyond carbon into materials, water resilience, and local environmental risk—topics that can slow projects just as effectively as interconnection queues.

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