DATA CENTERS · ISSUE #4
BUILD
IT RIGHT
Adult / Community Edition · Prestige

CREDITS

Build It Right · Data Centers #4 · Adult / Community edition
Story and production: GOTB Consulting, Chicago
Lead: Mateo Olmedo · Heroes: Commons, The Auditor, Gridline, Undertow · On screen: Lena Ashgrove, Channel 5 · Cameo: Dess

AI-GENERATED ART, FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

All characters, the town of Prairie Bend and Channel 5 are fictional. Any resemblance to real people is a coincidence. No real logos are shown. Real places, agencies and utilities are named only where public sources are cited; officials appear by role.

Every number was checked against public sources (see Sources). Disputed points carry a CONTESTED stamp and the strongest case on each side.

Nonpartisan: no parties, no politicians.

Safety: stay out of work zones, slow down for the cones, and never ride outside a machine.

Lettering: Bebas Neue, Oswald, Kalam, Libre Baskerville, Courier Prime, Special Elite (set in Pillow; no fonts embedded).

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THE CAST

MATEO OLMEDO

Two chairs, one level. Gives each side its strongest voice.

COMMONS

Night crews and neighbors. Lantern up.

THE AUDITOR

Sees it, reports it. Cannot fix it alone.

GRIDLINE

Lineworker hero. Power, fiber and the roads that carry them.

PRAIRIE BEND · 2:05 AM

FACT FILE · 01

Framing panel: the two chairs present the strongest case on each side. Figures appear on the panels that follow, each with its source.

Source: GOTB framing (no statistic)

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 02

The U.S. has more than 4.1 million miles of public roads. Bad and congested roads cost the average driver over $1,400 a year; the average driver lost 43 hours to congestion in 2024. 39% of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition (down from 43% in 2020).

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 03

623,218 bridges; average age ~47 years; 6.8% poor, 49.1% fair, 44.1% good (2024). About 4,927 bridges replaced a year (2014–2023); at that rate, a bridge built today must last 126 years.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Bridges"

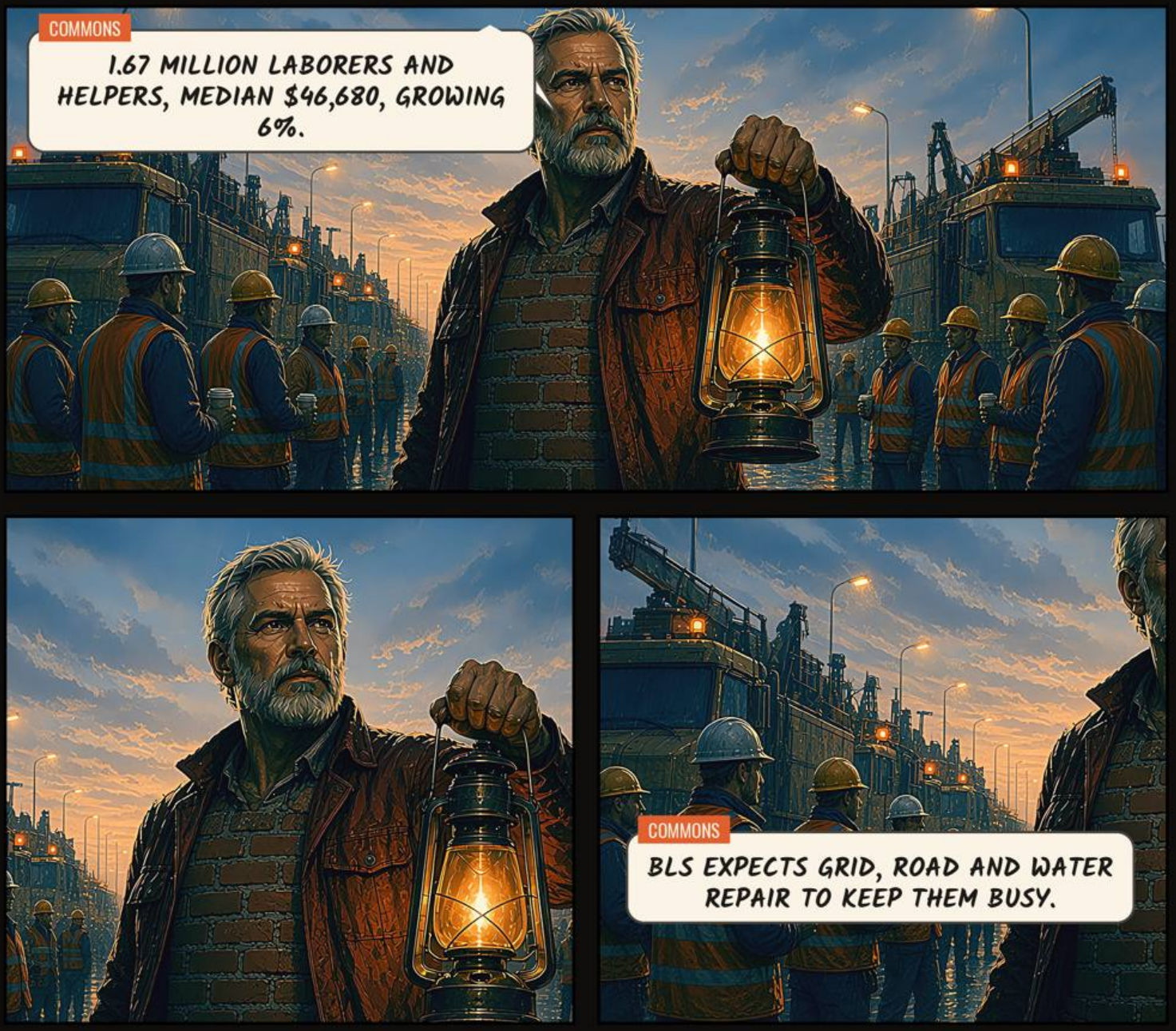
GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 04

Framing panel: the two chairs present the strongest case on each side. Figures appear on the panels that follow, each with its source.

Source: GOTB framing (no statistic)

GOTB / DC FILE



FACT FILE · 05

~1.67 million construction laborer and helper jobs (2025); median pay $46,680; growing 6% (2025-35); ~137,000 openings a year. BLS expects repairing the power grid, roads and water lines to keep demand for laborers steady.

Source: U.S. BLS OOH, "Construction Laborers and Helpers" (modified Aug 27, 2026)

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 06

VERIFIED

~50 permanent jobs, about half contractors. About 12-18 months and ~1,500 workers at peak to build one building.

Source: Virginia JLARC; Data Centers in Virginia (2024)

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 07

40,990 traffic deaths in 2023 (NHTSA estimate); 891 people died in work-zone crashes in 2022. Road crews may control traffic and run pavement breakers, jackhammers and tampers; highway and bridge crews may work overnight to avoid traffic.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"; U.S. BLS OOH, "Construction Laborers and Helpers" (modified Aug 27, 2026)

GOTB / DC FILE

GAS STATION

FACT FILE · 08

Federal gas tax of 18.4¢/gal (diesel 24.4¢) unchanged since 1993; it has lost 80% of its purchasing power.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 09

REPORTED

The 2021 infrastructure law (IIJA) provided more than $591B for roads since late 2021; construction started on 207,000 miles of roadway; a $684B 10-year roads funding gap remains.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 10

"No nation can build its way out of congestion" (induced demand); ASCE recommends prioritizing a state of good repair.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"

GOTB / DC FILE

FACT FILE · 11

Truck freight expected to grow 91% by value and 53% by weight, 2022-2050.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"

GOTB / DC FILE

CITY HALL CORRIDOR

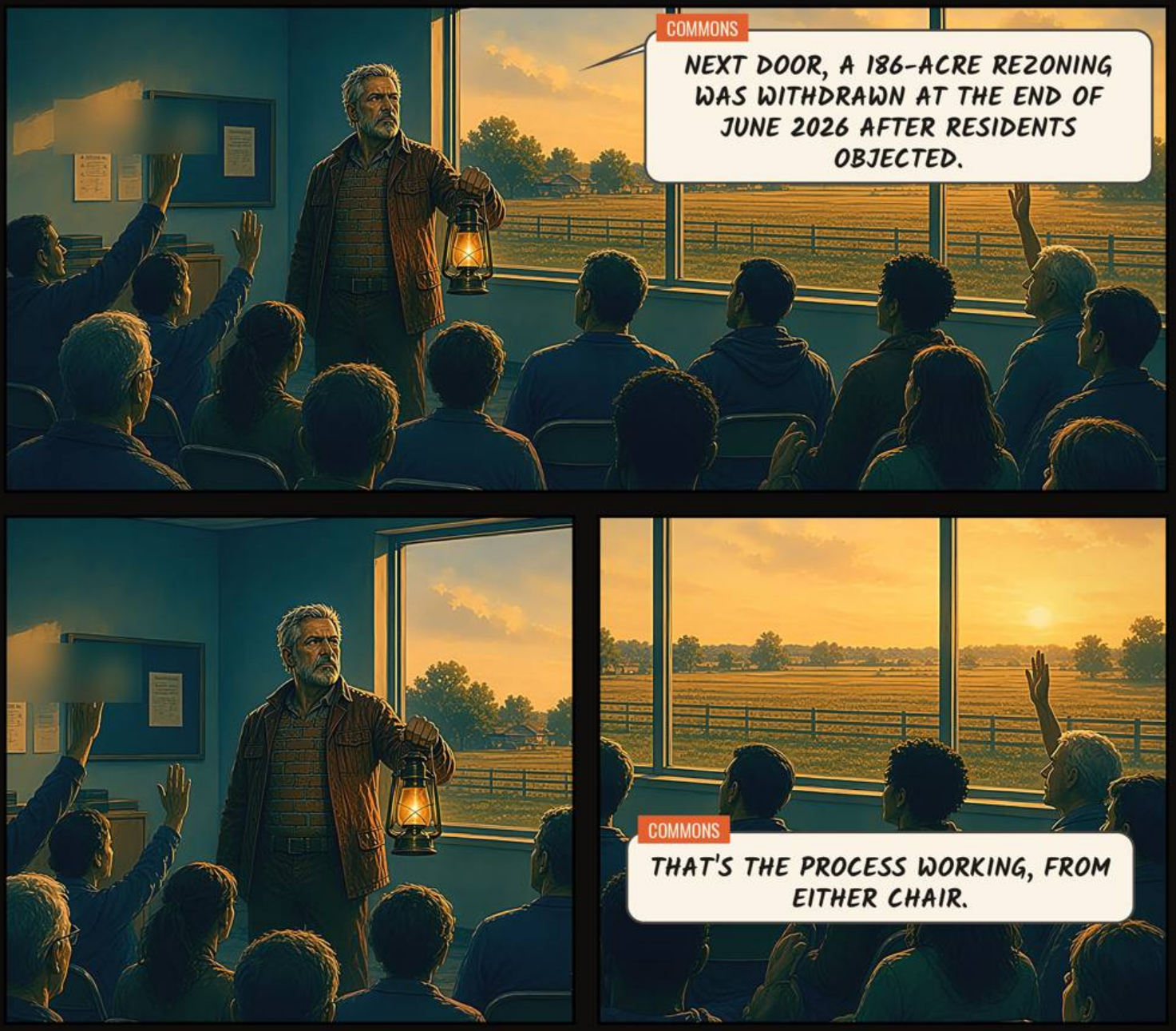
FACT FILE · 12

REPORTED

In Chicago, data centers are allowed by right in most commercial areas; a proposal would require planned-development review.

Source: WTTW news (Chicago public media)

GOTB / DC FILE



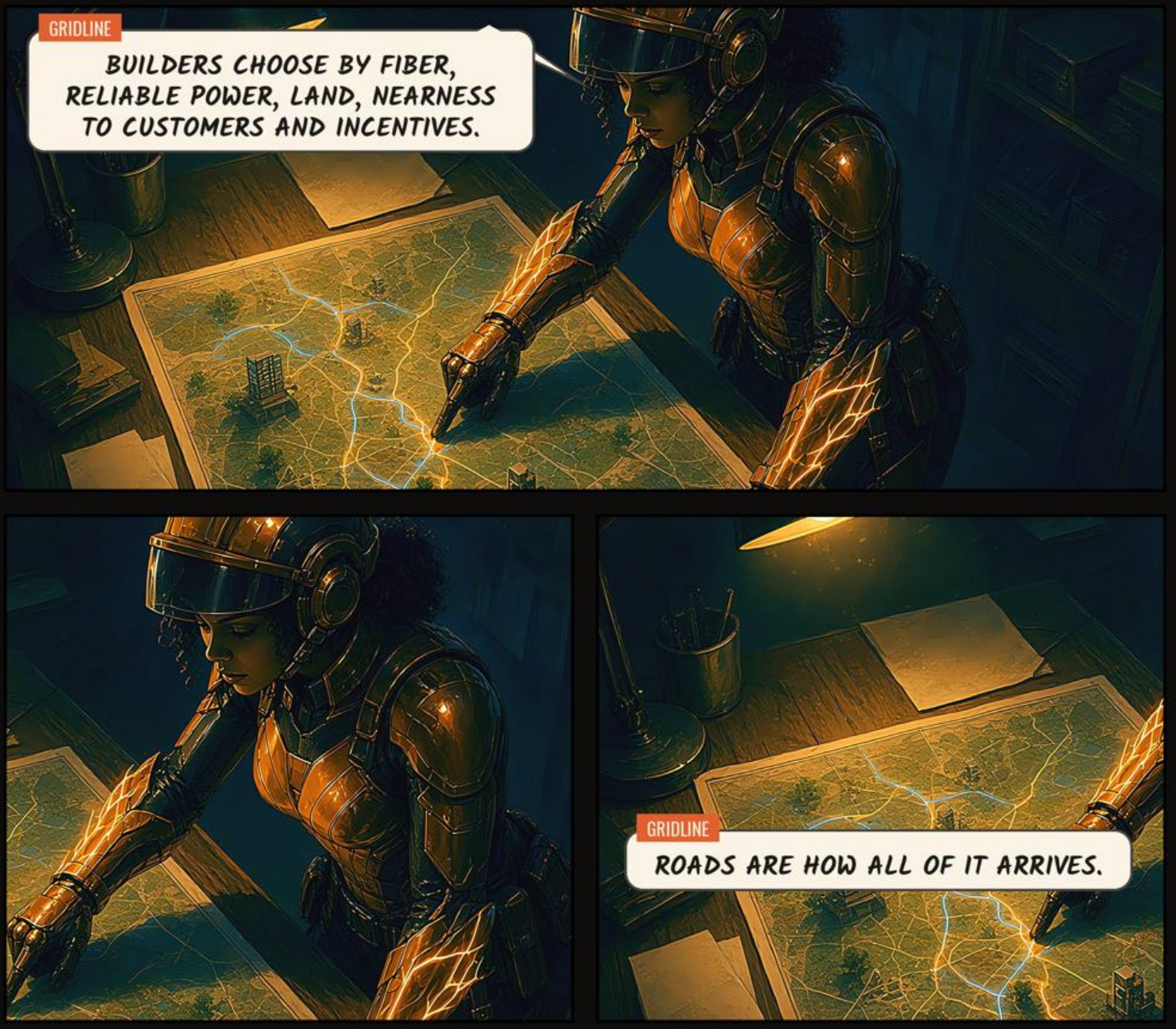
FACT FILE · 13

REPORTED

In a nearby suburb, a developer withdrew a 186-acre rezoning on Tuesday, June 30, 2026 (WTTW/Capitol News Illinois, Jul 1, 2026) after resident opposition; Plan Commission had voted 4-2 against.

Source: WTTW / Capitol News Illinois (Jul 1; 2026)

GOTB / DC FILE



FACT FILE · 14

Builders look for fiber, reliable affordable power, land, nearness to customers and tax incentives.

Source: Virginia JLARC; Data Centers in Virginia (2024)

GOTB / DC FILE

BRIDGE · DAWN

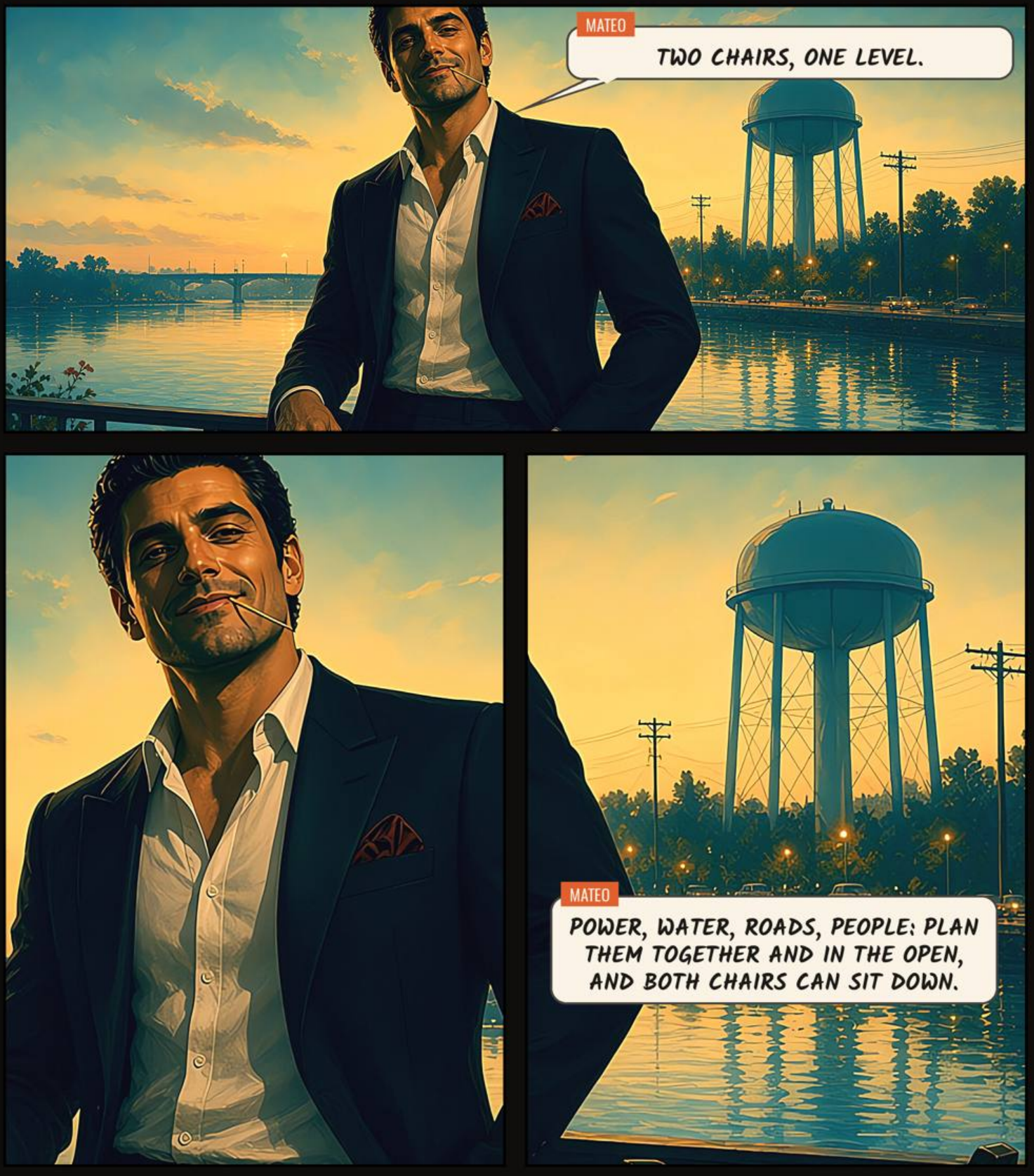
FACT FILE · 15

Since 2007, new highway bridges need a 75-year minimum design life. Sensors, drones and ultrasound help inspectors find problems earlier.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Bridges"

GOTB / DC FILE

LAKEFRONT · DAWN



GOTB Consulting, Chicago: infrastructure and procurement for the power, water and public works these projects depend on.

BY THE NUMBERS

4.1 MILLION MILES

Public roads in the U.S.; 39% of major roads poor or mediocre. (ASCE 2025)

43 HOURS · $1,400

Average driver: hours lost to congestion in 2024; yearly cost of bad roads and traffic. (ASCE)

623,218 · 47 YEARS · 126

Bridges; average age; years a new bridge must last at today's replacement rate. (ASCE)

18.4 CENTS · 1993

Federal gas tax per gallon, unchanged since 1993; lost ~80% of buying power. (ASCE)

1,500 □ 50

Workers at peak to build one data center building vs. permanent jobs after. (Virginia JLARC)

1.67 MILLION · $46,680

Construction laborers and helpers; median pay, 2025. (BLS)

TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL

The strongest case on each side, labeled. Nonpartisan.

BUILD

Jobs, roads and a tax base. Freight is projected to grow 91% by value by 2050; waiting has its own cost.

FIX FIRST

Engineers say you can't build your way out of congestion; repair the network first. Heavy construction wears local roads.

REVIEW IN PUBLIC

A proposal would add planned-development review for data centers in the city; one suburb's 186-acre plan was withdrawn after residents objected (Reported).

WHAT BOTH SHARE

Safe crews, sound bridges, and plans made in the open.

YOUR TURN

What would you ask before a big project comes to town?

_____

SOURCES

Full list with fact IDs: FACT_BASE.md and NUMBER_CHECK.md (GOTB internal).

ASCE 2025 REPORT CARD

ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Roads"

ASCE 2025 REPORT CARD

ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Bridges"

U.S. BLS OOH

U.S. BLS OOH, "Construction Laborers and Helpers" (modified Aug 27, 2026)

ABOUT GOTB CONSULTING

WHO WE ARE

A Chicago firm working on infrastructure and procurement for the systems communities depend on.

DATA CENTERS

Siting, delivery and community questions.

POWER

Grid connections, substations and lines.

WATER

Supply, treatment and cooling.

PUBLIC WORKS

Roads, pipes and public spaces.

THE END

TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL.

Plan them together, and in the open.

GOTB CONSULTING · CHICAGO

Data centers · Power · Water · Public works

AI-generated art, fictional characters