

Facebook to build massive data centre in Sweden

Written by AFP / The Swedish Wire

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Facebook announced Thursday that it would immediately begin building a massive data centre -- its third globally and first in Europe -- in the Swedish town of Luleå, near the Arctic Circle.

"After a rigorous review process of sites across Europe, we concluded that Luleå offered the best package of resources, including a suitable climate for environmental cooling (and) clean power resources," said the world's largest social media site, which counts more than 800 million users worldwide.

The icy region was especially attractive due to its cool climate, "since cooling servers is a major issue for data centres," Facebook said, adding Luleå also fulfilled its requirement that the data centre primarily run on renewable hydropower.

"Thanks to our main river Lule river, we can guarantee this," Luleå mayor Karl Petersen said in the statement, pointing out that the river supplied Sweden with nine percent of its electricity.

The Luleå data centre will consist of three server buildings each covering an area of around 28,000 square metres (300,000 square feet), Facebook said, adding that construction would begin immediately.

The first building would be open for business within a year, it said, while the entire data centre was expected to be up and running by 2014.

"About 300 full-time positions will be required during the first three years," Facebook said, without revealing how much the construction was expected to cost.

Swedish Enterprise Minister Annie Lööf meanwhile announced that the government would help subsidise the new data centre, pumping in 103 million kronor (11.4 million euros, \$16 million).

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"The investment in a data centre will give the area expertise in a future growth industry and, not least with the proximity to the Luleå Technical University, will create possibilities for more companies and activities in the region going forward," she said in a statement.

Mayor Petersen meanwhile said the facility would help turn the Luleå region into a major node for European data traffic, dubbing the region "The Node Pole".

"We hope other global companies see the innate climate qualities and benefits of the Node Pole region, and choose to follow in Facebook's path," he said.