The complex corporate web behind a $3.2 billion AI data center

In early June, a fire broke out in a still-unfinished building at the Lake Mariner data center in Somerset, New York, exposing just how little the local fire department knew about what it was walking into. Firefighters reportedly found no working alarm, no suppression system, and three dead hydrants; the safety documents they're legally entitled to see reportedly burned up in the blaze.

Steve Matisz, chief of the Barker Fire Department, said his crew went into the building "kind of blind," facing heavy black smoke from chemicals they couldn't identify because the safety sheets meant to inform them had apparently burned up. "It's been a difficult situation," Matisz said. He wasn't sure what to think about the claim that the safety sheets had burned in the fire.

The site is a former coal mine on Lake Ontario. The $3.2 billion campus is one of the largest AI data center buildouts in New York, and it has many stakeholders. A company called TeraWulf owns and operates the data center on land it leases from a company owned by its own CEO; Fluidstack, a UK-based AI company, will run the center; Google holds warrants for a future 14 percent equity stake and has agreed to guarantee Fluidstack's lease payments; and Anthropic is among the AI companies whose compute demand the facility exists to serve.

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