

IN LIFE

IN WEEKEND

Bond's back

A guide to area cinema

Peter Max coming to town

Perot Systems to open center

High-tech workers sought for Florence

By Mike Rutledge
Enquirer staff reporter

FLORENCE - Perot Systems will open a 70-employee data center in Florence by July, with an average salary "north of \$70,000," the company said Thursday.

The 20,000-employee, publicly traded business is based in Plano, Texas. It is named for former presidential candidate H. Ross Perot, a pioneer of the technology-outsourcing sector who founded Perot Systems in 1988.

The Florence center "will serve as a basis for yet another link, if you will, in our global network of data centers," said Mike McClaskey, Perot's vice president of infrastructure solutions and chief information officer. "In the U.S., it will join facilities in Plano, Texas, and Woonsocket, R.I."

The state-of-the-art center will provide "clinical systems hosting," McClaskey said. That hosting provides computer backup for medical records and billing.

The facility will have 20,000 square feet of computer space. Its anchor client will be Cincinnati-based Catholic Healthcare Partners, which owns 27 hospitals, most in Ohio, including the Mercy group locally.

"Perot Systems is hiring in this area," McClaskey said.

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Perot's decision

Location chosen because:

- Educated, skilled work force is available.
- Real-estate costs are low, along with suitable facilities.
- Low-priced electricity with high reliability.
- Region is not prone to hurricanes or earthquakes.
- Good access by highway and by air.
- Business-friendly government - in September, \$500,000 in state tax incentives were approved.

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Perot: High-tech business to open in Florence

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He referred prospective employees to www.perotsystems.com.

It's important for hospitals to have reliable storage for records that in the future no longer will be on paper, said Rebecca Sykes, Catholic Healthcare Partners' senior vice president and CIO.

"We have to back up that data, we have to store that data, and we have to make sure it's readily available when you enter the hospital," Sykes said. "So a partner like Perot brings that technology that in health care is just not our core (business)."

Dan Tobergte, president and CEO of Northern Kentucky Tri-ED, which recruits companies - particularly high-tech ones - to the area, said: "We think it's an excellent fit. It's a great target industry

for us."

The partnership with Catholic Healthcare Partners drew Perot to the region. It is working with Cincinnati Bell Technology Solutions to create the center in a Florence location they are not trumpeting, as a security measure.

"We're thrilled to add Perot, and we're thrilled to be in Florence, Ky.," Sykes said.

"We want to offer not just a welcome, but our support," Campbell County Judge-executive Steve Pendery told company officials at a news conference Wednesday, representing the region's political leadership.

Florence Mayor Diane Whalen noted that her city is better known as a retail area. But retail areas need good-paying jobs, she said.

"The high-tech, high-paying jobs that Perot brings to the city of Flo-

rence and Northern Kentucky just will allow us to prosper and grow in our retail and entertainment as well," Whalen said.

Florence City Coordinator Pat Wingo said she hopes other tech firms looking to build data centers will see Perot's decision and say, "It must be a good place - let's take a look."

E-mail mrutledge@enquirer.com

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- Conair pilots to vote on whether to allow union leadership to call a strike. B5

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of us will have to get up and move to a different TV set. He (husband, Doug) is always cheering at the wrong time.'

Erica Wickham, UM fan

Photos by Jeff Swinger/
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annual cut-your-own
Christmas tree guide