



**Illinois**  
**Department of Commerce**  
& Economic Opportunity  
JB Pritzker, Governor



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**State of Illinois and viaPhoton Announce New Fiber Optics Micro-factory in Aurora, IL**

*State-of-the-art fiber optics factory set to create new manufacturing jobs and spur economic activity for the region and the state*

AURORA, IL – The State of Illinois today joined viaPhoton in announcing the opening of its first hyperlocal fiber optics micro-factory in Aurora, IL. Leveraging Industry 4.0 technology, viaPhoton’s new factory will build and supply fiber optic solutions for data centers and 5G infrastructure across the state. The company’s investment in Illinois will help expand access to fiber connections that will enable thousands of megawatts of data center capacity to go online as well as supporting efforts by the Pritzker administration to increase access to high-speed broadband and create new jobs for Illinois communities.

“Manufacturing has been a cornerstone of the Illinois economy for generations, providing high-quality job opportunities for residents across the state,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “I am pleased to welcome viaPhoton to their new home in Aurora and to continue building on the state’s strong legacy of utilizing technology to expand access to needed services while prioritizing community investment and job creation.”

The new 25,000 square foot micro-factory and lab in Aurora, at 2640 White Oak Circle, was selected by the company for its proximity to highly skilled talent, and location in Illinois – one of the nation’s fastest growing data center markets. The development of this manufacturing location presents a unique opportunity for Illinois to create jobs in this highly specialized field, as the majority of fiber optic materials today are manufactured overseas.

“We are very excited and proud to leverage advanced manufacturing technology to bring high-quality, good paying jobs back to the US and Chicagoland region,” **said Baber Abbas, CEO of viaPhoton**. “viaPhoton will create domestic security of supply for fiber optics, which is a critical component in building a 21st century economy. Our customer first approach to manufacturing and our role as a

disruptor in the fiber optics and 5G space will create jobs here in the US. We are thrilled to partner with the State of Illinois to advance our shared goals of expanding digital infrastructure, preparing our local workforce for the jobs of the future, while putting Illinois back on the manufacturing map.”

The new viaPhoton factory represents an initial \$5 million investment by the company, with hiring underway for 30 new positions initially, and a goal to hire up to 200 more companywide in the next three to five years. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the workforce centers at DuPage and Kane County have assisted viaPhoton in recruiting employees and designing on-the-job training programs.

“viaPhoton’s new Aurora location will support Governor JB Pritzker’s goals of expanding digital access for all of Illinois, while creating new specialized jobs and apprenticeships for residents of Illinois,” **said Michael Negron, Acting Director of DCEO.** “Their commitment will help shore up the supply chain of fiber optics – supporting our own goals of creating digital access for every community in Illinois. It’s also a testament to our state’s resiliency, as we remain a top choice for businesses and their employees.”

With more communities preparing to implement high speed broadband as a result of the Governor’s bold plans to establish universal access to broadband by 2024, fiber demand is expected to grow rapidly over the years ahead. viaPhoton will also support customers in Illinois and beyond as people make a shift toward devices connected to fiber, which are essential for higher bandwidth and speed, and for meeting the digital needs in today’s 21st century economy.

“We are excited to welcome viaPhoton to Aurora,” **said Aurora Mayor Richard C. Irvin.** “As Aurora continues to transition from the City of Lights to the City of Light Speed, viaPhoton underscores the significance of Aurora’s ideal location as a technology hub. We look forward to an impactful relationship with viaPhoton as we bring new talent and technologies to our city and state.”

Working with local workforce partners, viaPhoton is developing new apprenticeship training programs which will focus on three areas of apprenticeship training: engineering, customer service/sales and machine operations. viaPhoton initially plans to bring 8-12 apprentices onboard to receive on-the-job training, making them eligible to earn higher wages as they learn new skills.

“It has been a delight to work with the viaPhoton team as they work to build a new home in Aurora and source local talent for specialized careers in manufacturing,” **said John Bradarich, Affiliate Relations Manager of the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center.** “Working with IMEC, viaPhoton will develop new customized training programs in high-demand, high growth fields of manufacturing. This in turn will help generate more highly paid, highly skilled jobs of the future, while providing important solutions.”

Manufacturing and Information Technology are two of the key industries identified as pivotal for Illinois’ growth in Governor Pritzker’s five-year economic plan. Governor Pritzker’s efforts to lay the groundwork for investment in these industries include: attracting a wave of new investment in data centers with a new data center tax credit, investing in broadband and infrastructure through the Rebuild Illinois capital plan, providing more certainty for high-tech industries by extending the R&D tax credit, and investing in Illinois workers by increasing funding for higher education and encouraging apprenticeships.

“viaPhoton’s selection of Aurora for its micro-factory is further evidence that Aurora’s investment into city-wide technology infrastructure and workforce partnerships is paying off,” **said Bryan Gay, President & CEO of Invest Aurora.** “viaPhoton selected Aurora from several Illinois locations because of our highly-educated and available workforce, utility infrastructure, and close proximity to a growing cluster of data centers in the region.”

viaPhoton’s launch follows several recent announcements of Illinois companies expanding in the past several months alone - including Stack Infrastructure’s recent investment in a data center in Elk Grove Village, Facebook’s new data center in DeKalb, and two new fulfillment centers planned by Amazon for South Cook, estimated to create 2,000 new jobs for Illinois.

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