

2010

newsmaker

Invenergy

“One of the top five largest owners of wind generation assets in the United States.” - American Wind Energy Association



Manulife backs wind farm

Andrew Willis

January 28, 2010

Ontario's renewable energy sector gathered another blue-chip backer Thursday, as insurer Manulife Financial led a \$179-million financing for a wind farm planned for the farmlands near Windsor, Ont.

Manulife (MFC-T17.13-0.01-0.06%) is the lead lender and adviser on a loan package for Invenergy Wind North America, which plans a 78 megawatt facility that will be home to 52 turbines, housed on 80-metre towers. Over the past few years, Manulife financed three other successful Invenergy wind projects, in Montana, Colorado and Idaho.

The new Ontario facility will be 64 kilometres northeast of Windsor, a city with a large industrial base. Electricity generated by the Invenergy project will be sold into the Ontario IESO competitive wholesale market, with the pricing framework set over the next 20 years under a contract struck with the Ontario Power Authority.

Manulife bills itself as a leading arranger and provider of debt financing for renewable energy projects in Canada, with a role in \$1.4-billion of loans to 11 projects over the past five years.

Invenergy now operates wind power plants that generate 2,000 megawatts of wind power.



Manulife Arranges \$179 Million in Financing for 78mw Invenergy Wind Farm in Ontario

January 28, 2010

Manulife formed a syndicate providing \$175 million in construction and term loans and \$4 million in contract support for the project. It is the agent and lead lender with an investment of \$88 million.

Invenergy Wind North America LLC, a unit of U.S.-based Invenergy Wind LLC, is constructing the Raleigh Wind Project, which is located approximately 13 kilometers south of Chatham and approximately 64 kilometers east northeast of Windsor. The project will consist of 52 General Electric 1.5xle wind turbine generators with 82.5 metre diameter rotors installed on 80 metre towers.

“We are very pleased to have been entrusted by Invenergy to arrange and provide financing in support of the development of this important project.

Invenergy is a leading developer, owner and operator of renewable power projects with over 2,000 megawatts of wind power developed to date. We look forward to their successful completion of the Raleigh Project later this year,” said Bill Sutherland, Senior Managing Director and Head of the Canadian Project Finance Team at Manulife Financial. “As one of Canada’s industry leaders in financing renewable energy generally, and wind farms in particular, Manulife supports projects like the Raleigh wind farm that are environmentally friendly and help build the long-term economic growth of the province, Canada and North America.”

“Invenergy sees renewable energy through projects like the Raleigh Wind Project continuing to grow in importance throughout Canada and North America for years to come,” said Andrew Flanagan, Invenergy’s Vice President for Business Development in Canada, “We are committed to the growth of this business and appreciate Manulife’s commitment to the industry.”

This wind farm financing is the fourth arranged by Manulife over the past year. The company anticipates completing several additional renewable power project financings in 2010. Manulife is a leading arranger and provider of debt financing for renewable energy projects in Canada. In the past five years, it has arranged \$1.4 billion and provided \$800 million in financing for 11 projects in Canada.

Electricity generated by the project will be sold into the Ontario IESO competitive wholesale market with the price fixed under a contract for differences with the Ontario Power Authority for a term of 20 years. The OPA is an independent non-profit, non-taxable corporation established by the Province of Ontario under the Electricity Restructuring Act of 2004.

Manulife has worked with Invenergy previously, helping to finance a portfolio of three wind projects in Montana, Colorado and Idaho. The portfolio has performed exceedingly well with production over the past two years exceeding the original forecast.

<< About Manulife Financial >> Manulife Financial is a leading Canadian-based financial services group serving millions of customers in 22 countries and territories worldwide.

Operating as Manulife Financial in Canada and Asia, and primarily through John Hancock in the United States, the Company offers customers a diverse range of financial protection products and wealth management services through its extensive network of employees, agents and distribution partners. Funds under management by Manulife Financial and its

subsidiaries were Cdn\$437 billion (US\$407 billion) as at September 30, 2009.

Manulife Financial Corporation trades as 'MFC' on the TSX, NYSE and PSE, and under '945' on the SEHK. Manulife Financial can be found on the Internet at www.manulife.com.

Brown Co. To Probe If Windmills Interfere With 911 Calls

March 1, 2010



GREEN BAY, Wis. (WTAQ) - Those opposing a new wind energy farm south of Green Bay want Brown County officials to see if the windmills would interfere with 911 calls. The county's public safety committee will discuss the project Tuesday evening. Invenergy wants to put up 100 wind turbines in the towns of Morrison, Holland, Wrightstown, and Glenmore – while Brown County improves its 911 system by putting a dozen radio towers in new locations.

Jim Nickel, the head of the county's public safety communications, says the wind farm will not be a problem if the turbines are at least a half-mile away from the radio towers. And he says only 1 or 2 windmills have had to be repositioned under the county's tower plans. Kevin Parzyck of Invenergy says he's never heard of a wind farm causing emergency radio interference. The wind turbines would provide enough electricity for 40,000 homes. It would be the county's first major wind farm.



Tonbridge Enters Anchor Shipper Agreement With Invenergy

By NAW Staff

April 6, 2010

Tonbridge Power Inc. has entered into a second agreement with anchor shipper Invenergy Wind Development LLC that will further the development of Tonbridge's Green Line project in Montana.

The Green Line project will be approximately 100 miles in length and is Tonbridge's second transmission-line project. It will run southwest from the south end of Tonbridge's Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. transmission line, which is currently under construction, and connect with Bonneville Power Administration's transmission system.

The total capacity requests now equal 850 MW on the Green Line. The formal allocation of these capacity requests will occur through a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approval process. In this respect, Gaelectric and Invenergy will be anchor shippers and will receive their development contributions back over time, through credits against contracted transmission tariff charges after the line is in service.

Invenergy Wind Development LLC is an affiliate of Chicago-based Invenergy Wind LLC, a developer of large-scale wind projects.



Brown County Citizens for Responsible Wind Energy works to gain support in wind-farm debate

By Tony Walter

May 3, 2010

The citizens group opposing the proposed wind farm in southern Brown County has hired the former attorney for the Public Service Commission to represent them.

Ed Marion, chief of staff for former Gov. Tommy Thompson, will represent the Brown County Citizens for Responsible Wind Energy when Invenergy's application to erect 100 wind turbines in the towns of Morrison, Wrightstown, Holland and Glenmore goes to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission later this year.

Invenergy is awaiting siting guidelines from the PSC before resubmitting its application. The Chicago-based company has built wind farms in other locations, including Fond du Lac County.

The citizens group has launched an effort to gain political and public support for its claims that the proposed turbine locations represent potential health and safety hazards. Its plan includes lobbying the PSC, working with local municipalities to develop ordinances protecting property rights and getting information about wind turbines to the public.

"This is a pivotal time," said Steve Deslauriers, a Holland resident and member of the citizens group, noting that a law passed in 2009 gave the state more authority in wind turbine siting. "We aren't against wind energy. But there's a right way to site turbines and there's a wrong way. They (Invenergy) have proposed them in the wrong way."

The citizens group has raised money through donations and fundraisers. In addition to paying Marion, it has paid for four large billboard ads in Brown County promoting more education about wind turbines. The group incorporated as a nonprofit in January, and its total assets aren't disclosed.

But Deslauriers said funding for the project is an issue.

"People are digging into their own pockets," he said.

Carl Kuehne, retired CEO of American Foods Group, is actively opposing the Invenergy plan.

"I'm in it up to my hubcaps," Kuehne said. "Our focus is trying to create public awareness on all the issues."

The amount the group has spent on its effort was not available because it has not had to disclose its finances, and sources declined to reveal how much has been spent.

Dr. Herbert Coussons, a Wrightstown physician and member of the citizen group's board of directors, said wind turbines eventually will be built in the county.

"But for health and safety reasons, they should not be sited close to where people work, live and go to school," Coussons said. "It's a community issue with statewide interest."

Invenergy has contracts with several property owners to build the turbines on their property, paying them approximately

\$8,000 per year. The proposed turbines would be a minimum of 1,000 feet from homes, but the citizens group says there must be a 2,640-foot setback to prevent health hazards.

Invenergy officials have said the wind farm would provide an economic benefit for the public.

A spokesman for the company has said the group opposing the project is spreading unnecessary fear about the health impact of wind turbines.

Kevin Parcyck, project manager for the Invenergy proposals in Brown County, said the citizens group efforts are counter to the state's emphasis on renewable energy.

"In terms of BCCRWE, it is important that people look at who is leading and funding the group, and whether it is concerned with the collective good of Brown County and its residents, or much narrower interests," Parcyck said.

"The development of wind energy enjoys broad, bipartisan support in Wisconsin and across the country because of its tremendous economic and green-energy benefits. Wind energy brings direct economic development to the state in the form of new jobs, substantial tax revenue and landowner financial participation in projects."

After the siting guidelines are approved by the PSC and Invenergy resubmits its application, a 180-day public comment period will begin.

Bloomberg Businessweek

Firm proposes 200 megawatt Nebraska wind farm

The Associated Press

July 15, 2010

A Chicago company submitted plans Thursday to build a 200-megawatt wind farm in northeast Nebraska on the same day a new state law encouraging wind power development took effect.

Invenergy submitted a proposal to the Nebraska Power Review Board to spend \$448 million installing 133 wind turbines on about 45,000 acres of Antelope and Boone counties. One megawatt is roughly enough to power 200 to 300 American homes for a day.

The American Wind Energy Association says Nebraska ranks sixth in the country for wind-energy potential, but 24th for actual production at the end of last year. One reason is it's the only state where all electric customers are served by publicly owned utilities.

State Sen. Chris Langemeier of Schuyler said Invenergy's application suggests the new wind power law will have a positive impact.

"It also sends a message that Nebraska is officially open for the business of renewable energy development," Langemeier said.

Passed by the Legislature this spring, the law is designed to make it easier for private companies to develop Nebraska wind power. There were concerns about how some of laws governing Nebraska's publicly owned utilities would affect private power developments.

Being the only state where all electric customers are served by publicly owned utilities has helped limit energy costs in Nebraska, but also has limited wind-power development because public utilities couldn't collect federal tax incentives. Wind power costs more than other options, and public utilities are required to deliver the cheapest power possible.

The state power review board will review Invenergy's proposal over the next six months to a year. The board must approve the project before construction can begin.

Invenergy estimates it will take about 10 months to build the wind farm once it is approved.



Boone County to get new wind farm

By Robert Pore

July 15, 2010

A law passed by the Legislature earlier this year to help grow the state's wind energy potential is already paying dividends, said state Sen. Chris Langemeier of Schuyler, chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

On Thursday, he said that an application for the development of wind energy for export has been filed with the Nebraska Power Review Board.

Langemeier said the application is the first of its kind to be considered under LB1048, a bill to promote renewable energy development in Nebraska, which took effect on Thursday.

The application was filed by Invenergy, a company that owns and operates large-scale renewable and clean energy generation facilities throughout North America and Europe. The 200-megawatt project will be constructed in Boone and Antelope counties.

The project will comprise 133 turbines across approximately 45,000 acres of land.

Langemeier said the application states that the project will result in up to \$75 million in revenue to Nebraska residents through landowner royalties, property taxes, permanent operations and maintenance positions, as well as temporary construction jobs. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$448 million.

"An application for a large-scale wind project, being filed on the first day that LB1048 is effective, confirms that the new law will have a positive economic impact on Nebraska," Langemeier said. "It also sends a message that Nebraska is officially open for the business of renewable energy development."

Mark Jacobson, Invenergy's director of business development, said Invenergy is pleased to be the first wind company to apply for approval of a project under this new law.

"The more project opportunities, the more economic benefits will accrue to Nebraska communities that host wind projects through lease payments to landowners, tax revenue and other economic development," Jacobson said. "These local benefits can support municipal improvements, schools and public services.."

The Legislature passed LB1048 earlier this year, and Gov. Dave Heineman signed it into law on April 12. The Power Review Board must approve the application before the project can begin. It is anticipated that approval will take six to 12 months. It is then expected to take 10 months to construct the 133-turbine project.

Omaha World-Herald

New wind law brings fast action

By Paul Hammel

July 16, 2010

LINCOLN — Hours after it took effect, a new state wind-energy law inspired a proposal for a half-billion-dollar wind farm near Elgin, Neb.

Invenergy, based in Chicago and the nation's largest private wind developer, filed an application Thursday morning to build a \$448-million wind farm between Elgin and Petersburg in northeast Nebraska.

The farm would have 133 wind turbines, generate 200 megawatts of power and sprawl across 45,000 acres, making it the state's largest wind farm. It would also be the first designed to export power primarily to customers outside the state.

The State Legislature passed a law this spring, Legislative Bill 1048, in hopes of inspiring such private development of wind farms for export. The law became effective Thursday.

In the past, private firms have experienced financial and regulatory barriers because of Nebraska's unique status as a public power state.

State laws had to be changed to allow private generation of electric power that didn't have to meet a "least cost" standard for generation facilities. And the state's major public utilities, the Omaha Public Power District and Nebraska Public Power District, wanted assurances their ratepayers would not take on new expenses for things like transmission lines for private developers.

State Sen. Chris Langemeier of Schuyler, who led passage of LB 1048, said the Invenergy project would generate \$75 million in benefits through increased taxes, lease payments to landowners, and economic development.

He said Thursday's application confirms that the new law will have a positive economic impact.

"It also sends a message that Nebraska is officially open for the business of renewable energy development," he said.

Construction on one wind farm in the Petersburg area, the 80-megawatt Laredo Ridge project, has already begun. It is being built by Midwest Wind Energy in cooperation with NPPD.

If the Invenergy project moves ahead, the tall hills between Petersburg and Elgin would become the wind-farm capital of Nebraska.

The Invenergy project would require approval by the Nebraska Power Review Board. That could take six to 12 months. Construction would require an additional 10 months.

Some observers predict a slackening of wind development ahead because of dropping costs for natural gas, overdevelopment of renewable energy generation in some states and a tough climate for attracting investors.

David Levy of Omaha, the attorney who represents Invenergy, said the company believes it will obtain financing for the project.

No "power purchase agreements" have been signed with customers, which is required by LB 1048, said Mark Jacobson, the

director of business development for Invenergy.

But Jacobson said he is confident those will be coming. Construction, he said, could begin in 2011 or 2012.

Nebraska, he said, has among the nation's best wind resources, and it recently joined with the Southwest Power Pool, which provides better access to markets to the south. The new law allows private firms a chance to export power, he added.

"It's only a matter of time," Jacobson said.

Tim Texel, executive director of the Power Review Board, said he has fielded several contacts with other private developers and expects to see another application for a large-scale, private wind farm in the next few months.

The New York Times

Expect the World®

Turbines Too Loud? Here, Take \$5,000

By William Yardley

July 31, 2010



IONE, Ore. — Residents of the remote high-desert hills near here have had an unusual visitor recently, a fixer working out the kinks in clean energy.

Related

Patricia Pilz of Caithness Energy, a big company from New York that is helping make this part of Eastern Oregon one of the fastest-growing wind power regions in the country, is making a tempting offer: sign a waiver saying you will not complain about excessive noise from the turning turbines — the whoosh, whoosh, whoosh of the future, advocates say — and she will cut you a check for \$5,000.

“Shall we call it hush money?” said one longtime farmer, George Griffith, 84. “It was about as easy as easy money can get.”

Mr. Griffith happily accepted the check, but not everyone is taking the money. Even out here — where the recession has steepened the steady decline of the rural economy, where people have long supported the massive dams that harness the Columbia River for hydroelectric power, where Oregon has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in tax incentives to cultivate alternative energy — pockets of resistance are rising with the windmills on the river banks.

Residents in small towns are fighting proposed projects, raising concerns about threats to birds and big game, as well as about the way the giant towers and their blinking lights spoil some of the West’s most alluring views.

Here, just west of where the Columbia bends north into Washington, some people are fighting turbines that are already up and running. In a region where people often have to holler to be heard over the roar of the wind across the barren hills, they say it is the windmills that make too much noise.

“The only thing we have going for us is the Oregon state noise ordinance,” said Mike Eaton, an opponent of the turbines.

Oregon is one of a growing number of places that have drafted specific regulations restricting noise from wind turbines. The Oregon law allows for noise to exceed what is considered an area’s ambient noise level by only a certain amount. But what those ambient levels are is sometimes disputed, as is how and where they should be measured.

And while state law limits turbine noise, the state office that once enforced industrial noise laws, housed within the

Department of Environmental Quality, was disbanded in 1991, long before wind power became a state priority.

“We have the regulations still on the books, and entities are expected to comply with those regulations,” said William Knight, a spokesman for the Department of Environmental Quality. “But there really isn’t anybody from D.E.Q. going around to find out if that’s occurring. I’m not sure who you’d call out there in Columbia Gorge.”

Local government is one answer. In May, after testimony from private acoustic experts, the Morrow County Planning Commission agreed with Mr. Eaton, his wife, Sherry, and a small group of other opponents that Willow Creek, a wind farm directly behind the Eatons’ modest house on Highway 74, was indeed exceeding allowable noise levels. The commission ordered the company that operates the site, Invenergy, to come into compliance within six months.

Invenergy quickly appealed — and so did the Eatons and their allies. The county’s board of commissioners also asked the planning commission to clarify its decision. A hearing is scheduled for this month.

“The appeals were all based on the same questions,” said Carla McLane, the county planning director. “What does ‘not in compliance’ mean, and what does it take to be in compliance in six months?”

Opponents say the constant whooshing from the turbines makes them anxious and that the low-level vibrations keep them awake at night. Some say it gives them nausea and headaches. Many other residents say they hear little or nothing at all, and the question of whether windmill noise can harm health is in dispute.

Critics say those complaining about Willow Creek are just angry that they were not able to lease their land to wind developers. Some opponents say they would be happy if Invenergy just turned certain turbines off at night, but others say they want reimbursement for losing their pastoral way of life.

“What we’re really trying to do is get Invenergy to the bargaining table,” said Dan Williams, a builder who is part of the group frustrated with the noise from Willow Creek.

While Invenergy is still dealing with the noise issue even after Willow Creek, which has 48 turbines, has been up and running for more than 18 months, Caithness Energy, the company asking some residents to sign waivers allowing noise to exceed certain limits, hopes it can solve the issue up front. It also has more at stake.

Caithness is building a much larger wind farm adjoining Willow Creek called Shepherd’s Flat. The new farm is expected to have 338 turbines and generate more than 900 megawatts when it is completed in 2013, which would make it one of the largest wind facilities in the country.

Large farms like Shepherd’s Flat are regulated by the state. Tom Stoops, the council secretary for the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council, said that large projects must prove they will comply with the noise ordinance and that noise waivers, or easements, are among the solutions. Asked if it was common for companies to pay people to sign such easements, Mr. Stoops said, “That’s probably a level of detail that doesn’t come to us.”

Ms. Pilz, the local Caithness representative, did not volunteer the information that Caithness offers people money to sign noise easements, though she eventually confirmed in an interview that it did. She also would not say how much money it offers, though several property owners said she had offered them \$5,000.

“What we don’t do in general is change the market price for a waiver,” Ms. Pilz said. “That’s not fair.”

Some people who did not sign said that Ms. Pilz made them feel uncomfortable, that she talked about how much Shepherd’s Flat would benefit the struggling local economy and the nation’s energy goals, and that she suggested they were not thinking of the greater good if they refused.

“The lady that came said everyone else signed,” said Jarrod Ogden, 33, a farmer whose house would be directly opposite several 300-foot turbines once Shepherd’s Flat is completed. “But I know for a fact that some people didn’t. I’m all for windmills, but I’m not going to let them buy me like that. I think they’re just trying to buy cheap insurance.”

Nebraska reaches out to wind energy exporters

By Art Hovey

August 17, 2010

Nebraska rolled out the red carpet for wind energy companies on Tuesday, and plenty of people responded to the invitation to hear details of the state's recently ramped-up aspirations for exporting wind power.

Horizon Wind Energy of Houston, Midwest Wind Energy of Chicago, the Wind Capital Group of St. Louis, and Geronimo Wind Energy of Edina, Minn., were among companies represented at the Nebraska Wind Forum at the State Capitol.

It could be argued that the welcoming walkway actually went down on July 15. That's when a law meant to offer new opportunities for private development of wind power took effect in what had been the nation's leading public power state.

No matter how you date Nebraska's embracing of the future of wind, Rorik Peterson, based at Horizon Wind Energy's Overland Park, Kan., office, is happy to respond.

"We see it as a good start as far as opening the Nebraska market for wind," Peterson said during a break. "Obviously, you have great wind in your state."

What Nebraska has not had to go with its wind potential, until the recent passage of LB1048, is an export formula for market developers in the private sector.

Since the era of electrification began, the Nebraska Public Power District, the Lincoln Electric System and other public entities have been pretty much all there was to know about generation, transmission and connecting with consumers.

Now private companies are staking out some major territory in their efforts to export the output from whirling turbine blades.

Gov. Dave Heineman, Mike Flood, speaker of the Legislature, and Ron Asche, president and CEO of NPPD, joined in the welcoming remarks on Tuesday.

Heineman wants the state in the top 10 in wind energy production in 10 years. "I think we can get there sooner," he told an audience gathered in the Warner Legislative Chamber.

Flood called for a show of hands from those attending the forum from out of state -- something close to half from a gathering of perhaps 100 responded -- and told them, "There is no time for delay."

The distinction of being the first company to link with the new wind-export law already belongs to Invenergy LLC of Chicago.

On the law's first day in effect, **Invenergy announced** a \$448 million, 133-turbine project in Antelope and Boone counties.

A few days later, Midwest Wind Energy and others involved in a 54-turbine effort cut the ribbon at Petersburg on a partnership aimed at use of wind power in Nebraska.

Midwest's Patrick Dalseth, also at the Wind Forum on Tuesday, said financing remains one of the big hurdles for the private sector.

"It's a lot more difficult than it was in 2006 and 2007," Dalseth said.

There are some encouraging signs in 2010. "It's coming back," he said. However, "it's not as good as it was before the recession."



Illinois Wind Farm Going Up

By Breakbulk Staff

August 23, 2010

Construction has begun on a new wind farm located near Bloomington, Illinois. Mortenson Construction has been contracted by Invenenergy to build the project.

The White Oak Energy Center will generate 150 megawatts of power from one hundred 1.5-megawatt turbines supplied by GE Energy.

Mortenson will design and construct access roads and foundations, and erect the turbines. White Oak is Mortenson's fourth wind project in Illinois.

Accompanying photo is from Mortenson Construction's web site and shows construction of the Camp Grove Wind Farm near Peoria, Illinois.



State's Largest Wind Farm Coming To Gratiot Co.

Turbines Will Power Nearly 54,000 Nearby Homes

September 17, 2010

GRATIOT COUNTY, Mich. -- A new state of the art wind farm constructed in Gratiot County will be the largest wind farm in the state.

Invernergy Wind announced Thursday that it has made lease agreements with more than 240 landowners and will break ground on a 30,000-acre wind farm this fall near Breckenridge.

The wind farm will produce 200 MW of new wind energy, which has the capacity to power nearly 54,000 homes.

Earlier this week, the Michigan Public Service Commission approved Detroit Edison's 20-year power purchase agreement to provide renewable electricity to its customers.

"We have found great support from landowners and local officials in Gratiot County, who see the benefits of harvesting an abundant local resource," said Kevin Parzyck, development manager.

The wind farm project is expected to create more than 150 construction jobs for skilled Michigan workers. To operate the wind farm, Invernergy said it will hire 15 full-time local high-tech workers.

The wind turbines are expected to be operational by late 2011.



Invenergy wants to build wind farm near Belt

By Associated Press

November 12, 2010

GREAT FALLS, Mont. (AP) — Chicago-based Invenergy has applied for a permit to build a \$50 million, 24-megawatt wind farm about 20 miles southeast of Great Falls.

The Great Falls Tribune reports the request for the special use permit was filed with the Cascade County Planning Office on Wednesday.

Invenergy spokesman Mark Jacobson describes the location's wind resource as "screaming."

The Big Otter Wind Energy Project is proposed on 3,500 acres of private land just south of Belt. The power would be shipped to an existing 100-kilovolt transmission line.



Invenergy Plans 24 MW Wind Farm In Montana

By NAW Staff

November 12, 2010

Chicago-based developer Invenergy has applied for a permit to build a \$50 million, 24 MW wind farm southeast of Great Falls, Mont.

According to a company spokesperson, Invenergy filed its application with the Cascade County Planning Office for a special-use permit.

"We have filed a permit application with the Cascade County, Montana Planning Office to build the Big Otter Wind Energy Project," according to a company spokesperson. "Invenergy looks forward to contributing to the economic development of our host community, and to providing a new supply of clean, renewable energy."

Invenergy already owns and operates the 135 MW Judith Gap wind farm in Wheatland County, Mont.

According to a report in the Great Falls Tribune, the company has requested that construction be allowed to begin within 18 months of the issuance of a special-use permit, rather than the customary six months.

SOURCE: Invenergy

Invenergy plans 24MW Montana project

By Tamar Wilner

November 15, 2010

UNITED STATES: Developer Invenergy has applied for a permit to build a 24MW wind farm in Montana, according to reports.

The \$50 million Big Otter Wind Energy Project would be built on 3,500 acres of private land about 20 miles from Great Falls, the Associated Press said.

Invenergy said it has another 40,000 acres for future phases of the project.

The company has not yet secured a power purchase agreement for the project. It asked for an 18-month window to begin construction after receiving the permit, rather than the usual six months.

Invenergy already operates the 135MW Judith Gap Wind Farm in Wheatland County, Montana. It was completed in 2005, uses 90 GE 1.5MW turbines.

Invenergy has reserved 350MW on the planned Green Line transmission project, to export electricity from two Montana wind farms to the Pacific Northwest.

Wind energy plant in Montana

By Edward C. Gates

November 15, 2010

Invenergy is looking for a permission to set up a \$50 million which is 24-megawatt wind farm southeast of the Great Falls. The company has said the wind power project will provide an \$18 million economic benefit in the place in over 20 years like property taxes, construction contracts and the landowner royalties. Mark Jacobson informed about the location's wind resource as screaming, as per the Great Falls Tribune.

Jacobson also said it is very much like the Judith Gap wind regime and our company is the biggest independent wind farm developer located in the United States. Nineteen wind turbines producing capabilities showing a collective generation capacity of around 2,000 MW that has been build up by Invenergy and currently are running in North America and Europe. Currently one more 550 MW of Invenergy wind projects is under construction and almost 100 projects are running in United States, Canada and Europe.

Invenergy's is concentrating on the development and long-term ownership including the operation of utility scale wind energy projects with a size ranging from 25-500 MW. With a long view point Invenergy Wind obtains a practical approach to build a strong relationship with different project stakeholders and landowners, the host communities and the power purchase customers. Invenergy is successfully increasing its clean power portfolio to add the solar power generation.

At present, Invenergy includes many projects which are in its different development stages in the places like North America and Europe by both Concentrating Solar Thermal Power and the photovoltaic technologies. Their main aim is on the development and the long term ownership including the operation of solar energy projects with a size ranging from 5-500 MW. Solar energy is limitless and generates no greenhouse emissions so it supplies a stable, reliable source of electricity. The cost rise in energy and environment coupled with solar technology advancements, the solar power generation will give a solution for long-term competitive energy.



Residents raise concern over wind energy amendment

Decibel level would raise from 45 to 50

By Aaron Leedy

November 15, 2010

TIPPECANOE COUNTY, Ind. (WLFJ) - The sounds a wind turbine makes have some homeowners making sound of their own. An amendment to Tippecanoe County's wind energy ordinance was on the commissioners' agenda Monday morning. About 10 homeowners spoke out against the change.

"I'm begging you guys, please, just leave it where it is at. Lets not change the sound level. Lets not allow it to be any louder," said Tippecanoe County resident Robert Brooks.

Under the amendment, decibel limits would change from 45 to 50 decibels. Commissioner David Byers said one company, Invenergy, requested a decibel level of 55, but 50 was settled on. Byers called the amendment is a "win-win" for everyone.

"As we've said in the beginning, we'll tweak this. We've added distance to set-backs. We've added it to where the turbine companies have to really measure," said Byers.

Invenergy Development Manager Greg Leuchtmann said the change makes it a "practical" and "organized" ordinance.

"With the 50 decibel limit, it is actually more restrictive than what is currently out there for agricultural activities which is 55 decibels," said Leuchtmann.

Homeowners, however, still aren't satisfied.

"I'm not happy with it. I'm not happy that they re-writing the ordinance. They were fine with it before, so I don't know what the problem is," said upset homeowner Don Thelen.

"Regardless of how short that set-back is, you've got that 45, and now that's moving up and I have a real concern about that," said Romney resident Kevin Nicoson.

Currently Tippecanoe County has not hired a consultant regarding the noise level wind turbines make, an idea a homeowner brought to the commissioners Monday morning.

"It is an idea that came up. It's one we talked briefly about this morning and maybe something we'll talk more about between now and the second reading," said Byers.

Byers said the turbine companies are in the process of drawing maps to decide where to place the turbines in Tippecanoe County.

The amendment to the wind energy ordinance passed on first reading. It will be on the agenda at the December 6th meeting for final approval.



Invenergy to build 24 MW wind energy plant in Montana

November 16, 2010

Invenergy has applied for a permit to build a \$50 million, 24-megawatt wind farm southeast of Great Falls.

Invenergy to build 24 MW wind energy plant in Montana

Invenergy said the wind power project would bring an \$18 million economic benefit to the area over 20 years in the form of property taxes, construction contracts and landowner royalties.

Company spokesman Mark Jacobson described the location's wind resource as "screaming," the Great Falls Tribune reported.

"It's very similar to the Judith Gap wind regime," Jacobson said, referring to the company's 135-megawatt Judith Gap Wind Farm in Wheatland County.

Invenergy is the largest independent wind farm developer in the United States. Nineteen wind turbines generating facilities, representing an aggregate generation capacity of over 2,000 MW, have been developed by Invenergy and are now operating in North America and Europe.

Another 550 MW of Invenergy wind projects are currently under construction and nearly 100 projects are in active development in the United States, Canada and Europe.

Invenergy's focus is on the development and long-term ownership and operation of utility scale wind energy projects ranging in size from 25 to 500 MW. With a long-term perspective, Invenergy Wind takes a proactive approach to building strong relationships with various project stakeholders including landowners, host communities and power purchase customers.

Invenergy is actively expanding its clean power portfolio to include solar power generation. Currently, Invenergy has many projects in various development stages in North America and Europe using both Concentrating Solar Thermal Power and photovoltaic technologies. Our focus is on the development and long term ownership and operation of solar energy projects ranging in size from 5 MW to 500 MW.

Solar energy is free, limitless and produces no atmospheric or greenhouse emissions. Therefore, solar power generation provides a stable, sustainable, reliable source of electricity. As energy and environment costs rise, coupled with solar technology advancements, solar power generation provides a long-term competitive energy solution.



Invenergy signs construction partner for 200MW Illinois wind farm

By James Cartledge

November 16, 2010

Wind power company Invenergy has signed up Connecticut-based Gemma Renewable Power as its construction partner for a 200-megawatt wind farm in northwest Illinois.

It has put pen to paper on a \$51 million engineering, procurement and construction contract for the Bishop Hill wind farm in Henry County.

The wind farm is to comprise 134 wind turbines, using 1.5-megawatt machines supplied by General Electric.

Gemma Renewable Power, a part of the Argan, Inc., subsidiary Gemma Power Systems, will design and build the facility's access roads, foundations and electrical collection systems as well as installing the towers, turbines and blades.

The company said it expected the project to be completed in late 2011.

Rainer Bosselmann, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Argan, said: "We are very pleased to sign the EPC contract for this important alternative energy project. Gemma's project management and construction capabilities will contribute to the success of this project. We again welcome the opportunity to work with the Invenergy team on another wind farm project."

Power from the Bishop Hill wind farm is to be sold to the Tennessee Valley Authority.



Gemma wins EPC contract for 200MW wind farm in Illinois

By EBR Staff Writer

November 17, 2010

Gemma Renewable Power has won an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract worth approximately \$51m from Bishop Hill Energy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Invenergy Wind North America, to design and build a 200MW wind farm in Illinois.

The Bishop Hill wind farm in Henry County is expected to consist of up to 134 units of GE turbines.

Gemma Renewable Power will design and construct foundations and electrical collection systems in addition to erecting towers, turbines and blades for the project.

The power project is anticipated to be completed in late 2011 and electricity generated from the wind farm will be sold to the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Gemma Renewable Power is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gemma Power Systems, an EPC contractor providing a range of services to the power and alternative fuel industries.



Detroit Edison seeks 245MW of renewable energy in Michigan

By James Cartledge

November 18, 2010

Power company Detroit Edison is in the market to buy 245 megawatts of renewable energy – as long as it comes from projects within the state of Michigan.

The firm has issued a Request for Proposals seeking energy from wind, solar, hydro, biomass or landfill gas facilities.

Successful projects will have to be up and running by 2014, although 120MW will come from projects operating by the end of 2012.

Detroit Edison is taking bids via the PowerAdvocate system until January 21, 2011.

The company is aiming to expand its renewable energy portfolio to provide 10% of its power from renewable resources by 2015. This target will require addition of about 1,200MW of renewable power, Detroit Edison said, with half the capacity from in-house facilities and half from third-party contractors.

It is expecting the majority of its renewable energy to come from wind farms.

The company has acquired easements on more than 75,000 acres of land in Michigan's Thumb region for development of utility-scale wind farms. The company also has two solar energy pilot programs that could produce approximately 20 megawatts of power.

Detroit Edison's largest renewable energy contract to date was approved in September (see this [BrighterEnergy.org](#) story), a 20-year, 200MW deal with Chicago-based developer Invenergy, which will see a wind farm installed on 30,000 acres of Gratiot County, Michigan.

The Invenergy contract boosted Detroit Edison's renewable energy capacity to nearly 4% of total generation.

One of the operating units of DTE Energy, Detroit Edison serves about 2.1 million customers in Southeastern Michigan.

Wind project could bring millions to area

By Cynthia Aukerman

November 18, 2010

Andrew Downey has four wind turbines on his Illinois farm, about 90 miles southwest of Chicago. Since the wind turbines went up, there's been a parade of vehicles slowly traveling past his farm, slowing for photos.

"I'm pretty sure they aren't taking pictures of my corn," Downey said.

A consultant for Invenergy, a Chicago-based company seeking to build a wind farm near Union City, Ohio, Downey discussed the benefits of wind farms at a recent public information meeting at Mississinawa Valley.

"There's no hiding the fact that any construction can be bad," Downey said. "But Invenergy has been exemplary to return the land to its previous condition."

That exemplary work included repairing any impacted tile. Downey said Invenergy hired local tile experts to repair damages that trenching causes in the construction. The landowner can inspect the repair work.

Invenergy was "helpful and cooperative" in siting the access roads to the turbines. Downey said he gained a new gravel driveway to use, especially helpful during wet weather.

Each turbine takes about one-third to one-half an acre, and the farmer can plant right up to the turbine.

Downey said, "That's a small sacrifice to make for renewable energy and for the community."

Nobody mentioned how much a landowner would receive for leasing to Invenergy, but Downey said the wind turbine income would enable him to keep his farm as a family farm. Nazre Adum, business development director for Invenergy, said all landowners would be treated the same in terms of revenue, but individual contracts might have different specifics because of siting issues.

Union City, Ohio village officials hope to place four wind turbines on a farm the village owns at the east end of town.

Ron Chalfant, Randolph County farmer and former county commissioner, had a different take on the advantages of wind turbines.

He explained, "My main interest is in farm land preservation. Ethanol and wind have been popular compared to other issues. Wind becomes a very good partner for agriculture."

Referring to the outcry against CAFOs, Chalfant added, "Some neighbors have moved from town and didn't realize about issues in the country. Wind turbines will help keep nuisance neighbors away. You won't have a lot of residential development around wind turbines. Wind works very well with agriculture."

Other people present at the meeting raised other issues. Dick Wilcox, international businessman, asked about static energy problems. Adum said his company would be required to do a telecommunications study prior to building the turbines.

Adum added, "With today's technology, much of the impact on telecommunications is minimized."

Chad Suitts, Union City resident, asked about a Willow Creek, Ore. lawsuit against the company regarding noise interference. Adum replied that the Ohio Power Siting Board, which must approve the location of the turbines, has strict rules.

Asked about liability issues, Adum said his company would have the liability, not the landowner, and his company would maintain the insurance. Asked about whether that insurance would cover damage or injury caused by ice thrown from the blades, Adum said it would.

Adum explained, "These machines are very smart. Ice on the blades will slow the machine down, shutting it down."

One person raised the issue of comparable costs of wind and coal in electricity generation. The answer was that wind generation is two-to-three times more expensive than coal or natural gas, but wind costs are going down with more competitive pricing developing as more companies get into the business.

Kevin Law, Randolph County economic development officer, said studies show that wind-generated electricity is comparable to electricity from new coal-fired plants.

By law, Ohio must have 25 percent of its electricity generated by alternative energy by 2025.

Terry Haworth, Darke County commissioner, said, "All three of us (commissioners) believe agriculture is the basis of our economy. We want it to remain so. We wouldn't embrace anything that would affect that. But agriculture has changed, whether we like it or not."

Invenergy has about 70 percent of the sites it needs under contract. It has started the studies needed to obtain the permits for the wind turbines. If all proceeds as the company plans, construction could begin in 2012. Estimates show the planned 125 turbines could generate \$1,625,000 each year for the MV Schools and the county.



Invenergy to Construct Wind Energy Farm Near Great Falls

Invenergy, a Chicago-based firm has filed an application for obtaining permits for construction of a \$50 million, 24 MW Big Otter Wind Energy Project, with an area of 3500 acres, about 20 miles to the southeast of the Great Falls.

November 20, 2010

The project would be economically beneficial to the area to the tune of \$18 million over a period of 20 years, in the form of construction contracts, property taxes and landowner royalties.

According to Mark Jacobson, a Company representative, the location with its high winds was appropriate for a wind farm. He stated that it was comparable to the company's 135 MW Judith Gap Wind Farm established in Wheatland County. The Big Otter Project generated electricity would be conveyed to an accessible 100 KV transmission line. For future phases the company also had 40,000 acres in reserve showing the neighboring landowners' support.

This wind project would facilitate around 100 jobs during peak construction time, and four wind technician posts would be available to operate the farm. The 400 feet turbines with tubular towers would be painted in shades of off white or gray. The company's initial analysis reveals that this project would come under the national range of bird mortalities, which are 2.2 birds for every turbine per year.

The company has requested that the construction work should commence in 18 months and not the usual six months after the special use permit has been issued. They would start construction only after an agreement has been finalized for the sale of the power generated by this wind farm.

Invenergy with branches all over Canada, US, Poland and Scotland is dedicated to clean power technology, and innovative practices for obtaining electricity. So far the company has developed five natural gas and 19 wind energy projects, bringing the total amount of electricity generated to around 5000 MW, powering almost two million households.



Sheldon supervisor says wind farm aided budget

December 2, 2010

SHELDON -- Town Supervisor John Knab is crediting High Sheldon Wind Farm payments for the lack of property taxes in the 2011 town budget.

Sheldon Energy -- an Inverenergy affiliate -- paid the town \$768,021 in November. Town residents would otherwise have been facing a town tax rate of \$6.30 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

The company has now made three such payments to the town, totaling more than \$2.2 million over the past three years.

"Not having to pay property taxes is a significant benefit to all Sheldon residents," Knab said in a news release. "In many other towns in Wyoming County, taxes are going up, not down. In Sheldon, we do not have that problem, and we have Sheldon Energy and the wind farm to thank for that."



Wind mill noise limit still up in air

By Dorothy Schneider

December 4, 2010

As wind energy farms prepare to sprout in Tippecanoe County, some residents are fighting a proposal that would allow for more noise -- and they fear nuisance -- from the developments.

"This is not just a 'I can't stand that mosquito' kind of noise," said county resident Julie Peretin. "This is about quality of life."

Peretin and other concerned neighbors are fighting a move being considered by the Tippecanoe County commissioners that would allow turbine noise to be as loud as 50 decibels any time of day, up from the current 45-decibel limit.

That's the allowable noise level -- about the sound of quiet dishwasher -- as measured 25 feet from the dwelling of a non-participating landowner.

A non-participating landowner is one who has not permitted construction of a wind turbine on his or her property and who has not contractually granted rights to a wind farm developer, under the ordinance.

The board was due to vote on the proposal Monday, but the decision is being pushed back to the Dec. 20 meeting while further research is done on the issue. Commissioner Tom Murtaugh said the county is getting additional input from an acoustic consultant out of Chicago.

That extra consideration is one of the steps residents like Peretin have been pushing for.

The commissioners approved an ordinance in August that set the wind turbine noise limit at 45 decibels. Peretin said she and others had wanted the limit set at 35 decibels.

Lobbied for change

After the 45-decibel limit was set in August, representatives of wind energy companies sought the change to 50 decibels. Commissioners said even at 50 decibels the county's wind ordinance would remain one of the strictest in the state.

Murtaugh hopes the consultant review will help decide if the county's sound limit is still in an OK range "so we can put this issue to bed." The commissioner said ordinances often need to be changed after the fact, but he doesn't expect the county would have to make many substantive changes beyond the ones being considered.

Official plans for Tippecanoe County's first wind farm were announced in early September.

Carmel-based Performance Services plans to build a 25-turbine wind farm on about 2,500 acres in the northwest part of the county.

In the southwestern part of Tippecanoe County, Invenergy Wind LLC of Chicago is planning a wind farm with 133 turbines.

Greg Leuchtman, development manager for Invenergy's project, spoke in support of the proposed noise limit changes at last month's meeting.

Comparable noise

According to Purdue's audiology department, 50 decibels of sound equates to the noise of soft talking, a washing machine, a quiet air conditioner or an electric toothbrush.

But the sound levels are not the only issue in play, according to Carmen Krogh.

Krogh, a board member with The Society for Wind Vigilance in Canada, is helping collect information from people worldwide who've reported adverse health impacts from living close to wind turbines.

Krogh is a retired pharmacist who used to work with a group that monitored symptoms and reports after new drugs were released on the market. Now she's trying to carry that practice into the study of wind energy developments, which she and others believe merit further scrutiny.

"We're finding the number one issue (being reported) is sleep disturbance," Krogh said. "If it's chronic, that can lead to sleep deprivation, and medically it can lead to a lot of other conditions," such as anxiety, stress and cognitive issues.

Debra Preitkis-Jones, a spokeswoman with the American Wind Energy Association, said wind plants are generally quiet and that developers try to be good neighbors.

And she pointed to a report from the chief medical officer of health in Ontario -- where Krogh and others are collecting information -- that found no scientific evidence demonstrating a direct causal link between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects.

But Krogh said there's simply too many unknowns. In the absence of human health studies, she said, companies have been relying on computer models to determine proper setbacks and noise levels.

"We would never put out a new drug without figuring out the impact to the human body," she said. "Our position (on wind turbines) is we really need to pause and conduct the human health studies that correlate."

Tippecanoe County officials dismissed a request residents made earlier this year to put a moratorium on wind farm developments here.

But Peretin said she's still optimistic that the county will work with acoustic professionals through this process to make sure the quality of life for residents is protected.

2010 commercial construction dips

By Peter Johnson

December 5, 2010

The value of commercial construction in Great Falls so far in 2010 is less than a quarter of what it was last year, with public and private officials blaming the lingering impact of the recession, plus the always uncertain timing of bigger projects.

They're working to spur more commercial building in 2011.

But even in a slow year, Benefis Health System kept plugging along with what has been several years of significant improvements and expansions of its hospital and related buildings. (See related story.)

And Malmstrom Air Force Base marched along with significant construction of housing, military and supplemental projects.

Mike Haynes, city planning and community development director, said the city actually has issued 52 percent more building permits of all sorts through Nov. 30 this year, 576 compared with 380 in 2009.

But the value of those permits, counting commercial and residential, new and additions, is down by about half, from \$73.5 million during the first 11 months of 2009 to \$36.8 million this year.

The value of permits for residential construction, additions and repairs is up 16 percent this year, from \$17.7 million during the first 11 months of 2009 to \$20.5 million so far this year.

So the culprit for the decreased total construction valuation this year is clearly in commercial construction. It's fallen from \$48.2 million in 2009 to \$13.5 million this year, when most commercial categories, including new buildings, foundations, additions and repairs, are included.

"We've had a lot of activity going on this year, but haven't had any of those really large projects," Haynes said.

The city has issued six permits for new commercial projects compared to nine last year, and there were much bigger projects in 2009, such as the \$17 million Orthopedic Center of Montana developed by Benefis and Great Falls Orthopedic Associates.

Buoyed by medical and hotel projects, 2009 was a better commercial year than observers expected amid the national recession.

"I think these 2010 numbers reflect what's going on in the economy right now," Haynes said. "Few major investments are being made right now in Great Falls, except in the medical field."

"I'm sure some folks would like to expand or construct new buildings," he said. "But they might have trouble raising capital or are cautious about exposing their business in this economy."

But, Haynes and others stressed, yearly reviews of building permit data give just a snapshot in time.

Permits for some large project can be obtained late in one year with the bulk of work done in subsequent years.

And construction work at Malmstrom, the Montana Air National Guard, Great Falls International Airport and outlying Cascade County employ lots of local folks but don't require Great Falls building permits because they occur outside the city limits.

Five bigger Malmstrom construction projects this year totaled more than \$115 million: \$67.8 million in new military family housing; \$25.8 million in repairs to Minuteman Village housing; \$10.6 million in upgrades to the Weapons Storage Area; \$7.2 million to build the Community Activities Center; and \$3.7 million for an addition to the Child Development Center.

Meanwhile, on Gore Hill, MANG completed an \$800,000 maintenance building remodeling, the last project to convert the base to F-15 flights, and started a \$3.5 million remodeling of the operations and training facility.

At the adjoining Great Falls airport, contractors completed the last, \$837,000 phase of a \$17 million project to rehabilitate the airport's Taxiway Alpha. Specialists also made sound insulation improvements on the first 12 of 340 homes near the airport in a program expected to cost \$15 to \$20 million.

Next year country

Like farmers waiting for more moisture, Great Falls business folks and officials are talking about next year.

With one large Benefis project under way and another set to start next fall, plus construction of the first phase of an animal shelter and other projects on the drawing board "we hope 2011 will bring more nonresidential development and a rebound in valuations," Haynes said.

"Great Falls had an OK year in 2010 given the recession, but we're nowhere near where we want to be in terms of commercial construction," said Great Falls Development Authority President Brett Doney. "We've been working with a number of existing and new businesses and anticipate having more commercial and industrial buildings and additions next year."

Doney mentioned two big regional wind farms set to begin construction next year, Invenergy's \$50 million project near Belt and NaturEner's \$805 million project near Shelby. Both would create a lot of work throughout the region, he said.

In addition, three major on-going projects are contributing construction jobs, he said: the \$85 million first phase of the Highwood Generating Station electrical plant, \$305 million in Rainbow Dam upgrades and construction of the \$220 million Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. power line that will connect Great Falls and Lethbridge. It is expected to spur further wind-farm development.

Mountain West Bank President Tom Mathews agreed the area economy has been slow but could soon be picking up.

"The Great Falls economy follows Montana's, and Montana's seems to follow that of the West Coast," he said. "We were late going into the economic downturn and probably late coming into the recovery."

"I'm seeing greater scrutiny by banks in underwriting loans but also reluctance by private sector folks to stick their neck out very far," Mathews said.

Businesses seem to be waiting for increased consumer spending before they expand, and consumers are watching for increased business hiring, he said.

Even so, Mathews said, Mountain West Bank is financing two significant business projects that are set to go next year. He declined to identify them.

And companies that deal with highway construction and public sector building have seen more work thanks to federal stimulus money, Mathews said.

Contractor Brad Talcott, who built and opened Staybridge Suites hotel on the West Side last year, said his company has applied for a permit to build a 5,600-square foot retail building just to the west and near the federal courthouse.

He anticipates it will be leased by retail stores or restaurants.

"Construction was definitely down in 2010 from 2009," Talcott said. "But I am hearing a lot more interest now among builders and business folks. People have put improvements on the back burner and there's some pent-up demand. It looks

like 2011 is going to be a lot better than 2010, although there might not be huge business projects.”

Two sets of entrepreneurs who completed building projects this year said they’re glad they chose to build when they did.

“My partner (Brandon Jurasek) and I took a vote and decided not to participate in the recession,” said Casey Doran, who opened a Mountain Mudd espresso shop downtown last month. They plan to build two other shops locally in the next few years.

“We looked at it as the best time to do the project,” Doran said. “Subcontractors were eager to work, materials were reasonable and we could get the project done quickly. There also was an abundance of good people looking to be hired and trained as baristas.”

“We viewed the recession as a downturn not a recession, and believe things are starting to improve,” he added. “People are still going to drink coffee and get on with their lives.”

Developers John and Jess Koehler of South Dakota completed a \$3 million Holiday Inn Express in Market Place that opened last month.

“It wasn’t easy to get lending but we worked through it,” John Koehler said. “Montana didn’t seem be to as depressed as the rest of the country.”

“We had the opportunity to get the Holiday Inn Express franchise in Great Falls, Helena and Butte and didn’t want to pass it up,” he added.

They got more competitive construction bids in the slower market, he said, and material costs had fallen.

“Hotels take a long time to build and we figured we’d be ready to open as the economy started to improve,” Koehler said. “At least that was our theory.”

Chicago Tribune

ICC approves plans for renewable energy contracts involving ComEd and Ameren Illinois

By Associated Press
December 16, 2010

CHICAGO (AP) — Invenergy, a Chicago-based renewable energy firm, says the Illinois Commerce Commission has approved its plans for three long-term power purchase agreements with ComEd and Ameren Illinois.

Invenergy president and CEO Michael Polsky says Thursday's approval will allow his company to complete the development of two new Illinois energy centers.

Polsky says Invenergy will enter into two 20-year contracts with ComEd by the end of December — one for wind power from its existing Grand Ridge IV in LaSalle County and one for solar power from a photovoltaic facility to be built in Illinois. The 20-year contract with Ameren will be for wind-generated electricity from Invenergy's planned Bishop Hill II project in Henry County.

Invenergy and its affiliated companies already operate twenty wind farms and five natural gas-fueled generating facilities.



Construction Begins On 30,000 Acre Wind Project

State's Largest Wind Farm To Be Built Near Breckenridge

December 7, 2010

GRATIOT COUNTY, Mich. -- Invenergy Wind announced Tuesday that it has begun construction of a 30,000-acre wind project in Gratiot County.

Officials said that will contribute to the local economy by providing jobs, millions of dollars in yearly tax revenue to the county and local municipalities, and payments to landowners.

Through a 20-year agreement with Detroit Edison, the project will bring clean, renewable energy to the people of Michigan and help the state meet its Renewable Portfolio Standard.

"The Gratiot County wind farm will bring significant, long-term economic and environmental benefits to the people of central Michigan," said Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

Granholm said the state's clean energy plan is expected to bring 30,000 jobs to Michigan by 2030. Since passage of the state's renewable energy standard in 2008, more than 17 companies, including Invenergy, have launched wind energy-related businesses in Michigan.

"This wind farm is the result of a great alliance between citizens, local business and community leaders, and local and state officials, who joined together to support Invenergy in our efforts to provide renewable energy and contribute to the area's economic development," said Jim Shield, Invenergy's executive vice president of development.

Invenergy expects turbines to be delivered in the spring of 2011, with construction slated for completion in late 2011.

Livonia Michigan-based Aristeo Construction will perform all civil, concrete and erection phases for the project.

Officials said the energy center, located near the town of Breckenridge in the townships of Wheeler, Bethany, Emerson, and Lafayette, will:

- Employ an estimated 150 skilled construction workers
- Employ 15 full-time high-tech workers to operate the facility upon completion
- Contribute to the area's economic development through property tax payments, which can be used for schools, fire and police protection, road repair, and other area improvements.
- Support the local economy through substantial yearly lease payments to more than 240 landowners, thereby helping preserve prime farmland for future generations
- Feature 125 1.6 MW GE wind turbines
- Power more than 50,000 Michigan homes with clean, renewable power
- Help Michigan meet its Renewable Portfolio Standard, which mandates that 10 percent of the state's energy come from renewable sources by 2015. The RPS was passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Granholm in

the fall of 2008.

“We are proud that Invenergy chose Gratiot County as the host community for this wind farm, which will provide clean energy to Michigan consumers,” said Gratiot County Board Chairman Mark Knowles. “This is an important time for our county, as construction begins on a project that is a new source of jobs and tax revenue.”

In addition to starting construction on the wind farm site, Invenergy also has established a local office, at 228 E. Saginaw St. in Breckenridge.

Zoning board to weigh \$50 million wind farm by Belt

By Karl Puckett

December 16, 2010

Members of the Cascade County Zoning Board of Adjustment will consider a second major power generation project in three months when wind developer Invenergy presents its \$50 million Big Otter Wind Energy Project on Friday.

Chicago-based Invenergy is seeking a special-use permit from the county to erect 16 turbines on 3,500 acres of land off Tiger Butte Road 20 miles southeast of Great Falls, across U.S. Highway 87/89 from the turnoff to Belt.

Residents will be able to testify on the project before the board votes, Planner Anita McNamara said.

Editor's note: This exclusive story is available only to the Tribune's print and e-paper customers. You may find the rest of the story in the Tribune's e-paper, a complete electronic copy of the daily paper. The e-paper is available for 75 cents daily or \$1.50 Sunday using the trusted online service, PayPal. Click [HERE](#) to get the Tribune's e-paper or click on the e-paper icon on the home page.

County OKs wind farm permit

By Tribune Staff

December 17, 2010

The Cascade County Zoning Board of Adjustment granted a special use permit Friday to a wind developer planning to build a 24-megawatt wind facility on farm ground off Tiger Butte Road near Belt.

Landowners, company officials and economic development interests that support the project filled the audience. Some residents in the audience wore stickers issued by the developer saying, "Support wind, support Cascade County." The company said the project would provide \$9.3 million in property taxes to the county over 20 years.

The 4-0 vote approving the project followed a three-hour meeting in which county planning staff and developer Invenergy gave presentations on the 16-turbine plan and with discussion among board members focusing on fire protection details. Developer Invenergy has 18 months to begin construction under the terms of the permit.

Nobody spoke in opposition, but one resident did ask if some of the 400-foot-tall turbines could be moved to protect the viewscape.

See Saturday's Tribune for details.

Cascade County zoning board OKs Belt-area wind farm

By Karl Puckett

December 18, 2010

Members of the Cascade County Zoning Board of Adjustment voted 4-0 Friday to grant a special-use permit to Chicago-based developer Invenergy to build a 16-turbine wind farm near Belt, which could grow to 10 times that size in future phases.

The \$50 million, 24-megawatt Big Otter wind farm drew support from landowners, as well as economic development and renewable energy interests.

Supporters said the project would bring money and more green energy production to Cascade County, which is known for its hydroelectric dams on the Missouri River.

"The main issue is money when it comes to landowners," landowner Jim Larson said when he testified in support.

Invenergy officials said the project will provide \$2.2 million in landowner payments over 20 years. Three landowners are leasing 3,500 acres of farm ground to Invenergy for the project.

Some residents in the packed audience wore stickers issued by the developer saying, "Support wind, Support Cascade County."

The project will generate \$9.32 million in property taxes over 20 years, or \$460,000 annually, and \$2 million in wages to three or four permanent employees over 20 years, according to the company.

About 100 construction workers will be on the site at its peak.

"Hope there are many more," said Richard Liebert, chairman of Citizens for Clean Energy of the project.

The Great Falls Development Authority, Montana Farmers Union and Montana State University-Great Falls, which began offering a degree in sustainable energy technology in fall 2010, issued letters of support for the project.

Nobody opposed the plans Friday, but concerns were raised.

Larry Irvine said he supported renewable energy, but added that three turbines will block "million-dollar" views he has of the Highwood Mountains.

"I'm just wondering if you can do anything to minimize it?" Irvine said.

Irvine and Mark Jacobson, Invenergy's director of business development, spoke after the meeting.

Board member Leonard Lundby questioned the company's fire-protection plan, and called a proposal for a 2,000-gallon cistern a joke. He recommended that the county require a 60,000-gallon cistern at the property cistern.

The public should be aware that the top of a turbine can catch fire, perhaps started by a lightning strike, he said. In that



case, wind could quickly carry sparks that land on the ground, Lundby added.

Invenergy's Jacobson said a 60,000-gallon cistern was too large.

"Quite frankly, I'm cutting you a huge break here with 60,000 gallons," replied Lundby, who threatened to withhold his vote.

In the end, board members agreed that a permit Invenergy will need from the state to build a 150-by-50-by-30 operations and maintenance building will require that all fire codes be met.

The county's special-use permit gives Invenergy 18 months to begin construction. That's longer than the county typically permits because the company requested additional time to market the power, Jacobson said.

"We're going to start marketing really heavy now," Jacobson said after the vote.

Big Otter would be Invenergy's second project in Montana. Its first project in the state was the 135-megawatt Judith Gap plant in Wheatland County.

The first phase calls for 16 1.5-megawatt General Electric turbines that will be 400 feet tall, including the blades. A 500-foot maximum height was approved after Jacobson said blade technology is changing, making longer blades possible in the future.

Eventually, a 200- to 300-megawatt wind farm will be constructed in phases in the Belt area, Jacobson said. The company has leased 40,000 acres of land for the project.

The life of a wind farm typically is 25 to 30 years, but Jacobson said facilities can be "repowered" after new equipment is installed. According to the permit, towers that don't run for a year will be deemed abandoned and Invenergy will have to remove them.

An existing 100-kilovolt transmission line will be used to ship the power, and a substation will be built below that line, company officials said.

Deron Lawrence, an ecologist with Entrix Environmental Consultants, said not too many raptors or bats, which can be killed in collisions with wind turbines, seem to occupy the area, probably because it doesn't have a lot of forests or wetlands, and the ground is tilled.

During a site visit, four raptor nests were found, but no golden eagle nests. Golden eagles are protected.

Additionally, acoustic microphones were set up to check for bat calls at night, which were below the national average, Lawrence said.

Additional analysis of the project by the state isn't required under the Major Facilities Siting Act because the project doesn't involve any new transmission, county Planning Director Susan Conell said.