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More wind power headed to Wayne County site

By ANDREA DECKERT - 9/2/2011

More wind-generated power is coming to the Wayne Industrial Sustainability Park.

A \$2.85 million project will add a 900-kilowatt wind turbine, which, working with the existing turbine on the site, is expected to meet nearly 80 percent of the park's energy needs.

The Wayne County site is the first in the region moving ahead as a fully green industrial park, said Kevin Schulte, a co-founder and CEO of Sustainable Energy Developments Inc., a wind turbine installer.

"This is a visible sign of green power that can be used as a marketing tool," he said.

Green energy can provide long-term, fixed-price energy, which can be attractive to companies as the cost of traditional power increases, Schulte said. The popularity of green business also makes the park's alternative-energy capabilities attractive.

The 40-acre park is home to three businesses that employ a total of roughly 150 workers: SED, Harbec Inc., an injection molding company, and Northern Biodiesel Inc., which produces biodiesel fuel from restaurant waste oil and seed oil.

The site is off Route 104 in the town of Ontario, not far from Webster and the Monroe County line. It is owned by the Wayne County Industrial Development Agency.

The new wind turbine, the second of its kind to be installed in the United States, will be made by German-based PowerWind GmbH.

SED completed the installation of the first PowerWind turbine in January at Berkshire East Ski Area in Charlemont, Mass. SED is working with the German firm and expects to order more turbines in the next year to 18 months for other SED projects throughout the Northeast, Schulte said.

The new turbine will be installed next to Harbec and will work in conjunction with its 250-kilowatt turbine to bring wind-generated electricity to the industrial park, Schulte said.

The existing turbine now supplies 15 percent to 20 percent of the park's energy. The additional turbine will boost that to 70 percent to 80 percent, he said. The turbines working together are expected to save the WISP businesses \$275,000 in annual energy costs.

Schulte said final financing details are being worked out and the turbine is expected to be delivered in April and working in May.

The goal of the WISP is to allow companies to share renewable energy resources through an energy "ecosystem." It will have the potential to offer cogeneration and distribution of thermal and wind-generated power. Some county leaders predict that the environmental and economic benefits will encourage other companies to locate there.

The park is modeled after what has been done at Harbec. The company is one of the first to implement successfully a hybrid microturbine, wind-powered cogeneration plant that can provide electricity, heat and air conditioning for the business.

The business park will focus on attracting companies looking to reduce their carbon footprint or firms developing green technology, county officials have said.

A comprehensive economic development strategy update prepared by the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council in 2007 estimated the cost of creating the WISP at \$2.5 million. The organization provided a \$200,000 low-interest loan for working capital in 2006.

The park has received state funding, including a \$300,000 grant in 2008 that was used to build infrastructure and make other improvements, so it is shovel-ready for businesses wanting to locate there. Contracts for work related to the grant were awarded by the IDA in January.

Margaret Churchill, executive director of the Wayne County IDA, said a trench with conduit and piping is being built to allow electric, thermal and other energy to transfer between the businesses at the WISP. The agency is finalizing a road extension and additional utilities.

Churchill said businesses have notified her office of interest in the WISP. The IDA markets mainly through Greater Rochester Enterprise Inc. and word of mouth, she said.

Having the WISP, as well as other alternative energy efforts, shows that Wayne County is "serious and proactive about sustainability and renewable energy," Churchill said.

Schulte said one day the park could power every company at the WISP and adjacent industrial parks, including the contiguous Beh Industrial Park. It could set an example that fosters the development of similar pods of sustainable industrial parks in the region, he added.

While the park will target certain types of businesses—a solar power manufacturer, for example—it will be open to all kinds.

The expectation of the WISP is to have more wind turbines and methane digesters along with more involvement from the public and private sectors.

"It's a showcase for our businesses," Schulte said. "It may get other business leaders saying, 'I can do that, too.'"

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