

# Board considers wind potential

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Thursday, June 26, 2008 2:07 AM MDT

Wind farms are the new power plants, according to a Rocky Mountain Power official.

"Wind is very exciting for us, primarily because coal fire plants just aren't being built right now, because of legal and other stuff," said Leslie Blythe, a local community manager for the power company. "Wind is a great alternative."

Blythe reported on the potential of wind power and current wind projects to the Natrona County Board of Commissioners during a work session Tuesday.

The company, she said, has a target goal of 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy production by 2013, much of which will benefit Wyoming customers. One megawatt can power about 750 homes.

"There are lots of ranchers looking at wind development throughout the state," she said. "Down in Carbon County, the ranchers are working together to bring these projects. The wind projects here -- just ours alone -- are considerable."

Ranchers in Cheyenne and Wheatland are also looking into the technology, Blythe said, but Rocky Mountain Power doesn't serve that part of the state.

The power company is looking into alternative energy sources because of potential resource shortages in the future. Wyoming, over the next five years alone, is estimated to require an additional 600 megawatts of power.

Because wind projects are built quickly, the company's current projects should be finished and running by the end of the year, Blythe said.

A project in Glenrock, at the power company's old mine site, will utilize 66 wind turbines and produce about 99 megawatts of electricity per year. Another, in Rolling Hills, will be the same size. And a third, smaller wind farm called "Glenrock Three" will consist of 26 turbines and produce 39 megawatts.

Another two wind farms in Carbon County, the "Seven Mile Hill" and "Seven Mile Hill Two" projects, will provide a total of 99 and 19.5 megawatts, respectively, and are also under way.

"We have our permits and we're moving forward," Blythe said.

Turbines at the new sites will be approximately the same size as those west of Cheyenne (which are 285 feet high with a blade span of 145 feet) and will be off white or light gray in color. They are expected to begin arriving sometime in July, and will be installed immediately.

"It's very difficult getting wind turbines right now," Blythe said. "There's a huge backlog, so you get them in as you get them in. And we have a number of restrictions on how to bring them into Glenrock to protect the interior."

The Glenrock turbines will be delivered via Hat Six Road and the Old Glenrock Highway to keep them away from the downtown Glenrock area.

Despite their size, the turbines will not be visible from the highway.

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