

# Duke Energy announces 200 megawatt wind farm near Glenrock

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Duke Energy plans to build a 200 megawatt wind farm northeast of Glenrock, a company representative told the Natrona County Commission on Monday.

"It's a site I found," Sean McCabe told the commissioners at a work session. "It has abundant and proven wind resources."

Duke Energy began collecting meteorological data in the area about two years ago, the same time it acquired Tierra Energy and Catamount Energy for wind generation projects, he said.

The \$400 million Top of the World Windpower Project will be located on 17,000 acres -- two sections of state and the rest private land -- immediately northeast of Glenrock and bisected by Wyoming Highway 95, and is close to high voltage transmission lines, McCabe said.

Unlike the 99 megawatt Campbell Hill project in western Converse County that requires the use of Cole Creek Road for equipment delivery, the Top of the World Project will not use that Natrona County road, McCabe said.

Each turbine -- including tower sections, blades and nacelles housing the gear box -- will require seven or eight separate deliveries to the site, McCabe said.

The project also is outside the core sage grouse areas and crucial big game ranges, he said.

The number of towers for the project depends on turbine availability. If Duke Energy uses only GE 1.5 megawatt turbines, there will be 133 towers on the site; and if it uses only Siemens turbines, it will have 110 towers, McCabe said.

A 200 megawatt project will generate enough power to supply between 50,000 and 60,000 houses a year, he said.

Because the Top of the World project exceeds the \$173.2 million threshold, Duke Energy will need to file part of the permitting process through the state's Industrial Siting Act, which requires a comprehensive review of economic, social and environmental impacts, McCabe said.

That will be factored into a two-year time line: the tentative schedule of meetings with public officials in July and August, submitting the necessary applications in the fall, a formal public hearing in December, a target date of January 2010 for receiving the permits, site preparation and construction in the summer of 2010, delivery of the turbines from fall 2010 to spring 2011, and becoming operational in the summer of 2011.

The entire project is contingent on Duke being able to find a buyer for its power, McCabe said.

Although this wind farm will be built in Converse County, Natrona County commissioner Ed Opella asked what kind of plan Duke has to decommission the project, remove the towers and remediate the site.

Duke Energy, McCabe said, will renegotiate with the landowners leasing their property for the wind towers and that's when it would begin setting aside money for decommissioning.

But Opella and commissioner Barb Peryam said the recent history of companies such as General Motors shows even a healthy business may falter.

McCabe responded that if Duke went out of business, banks with the equity in the turbines would find a company to run them.

Besides the Campbell Hill and proposed Top of the World projects in Wyoming, Duke has the 29 megawatt Happy Jack Windpower Project on line in Laramie County and is building the 42 megawatt Silver Sage Windpower Project west of Happy Jack, said company spokesman Greg Efthimiou in an interview from Duke headquarters in Charlotte, N.C.

Duke also recently announced it would build its 51-megawatt Kit Carson Windpower Project near Burlington, Colo., Efthimiou said.

Unlike these other wind farms under construction or on line, the Top of the World is a tentative "developmental project" until Duke contracts with a power company to distribute the electricity, he said.

"Once we sign a long-term power purchase agreement, that means we will proceed with the project," Efthimiou said.

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