

PacifiCorp contracts to buy power from another Converse County project



Components for a 1.5-megawatt General Electric wind turbine await assembly at Duke Energy's Campbell Hill wind farm in Converse County earlier this summer. Electricity generated from that wind farm and Duke Energy's planned Top of the World wind project nearby will be purchased by PacifiCorp. (Dustin Bleizeffer/Star-Tribune)

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Duke Energy has found a customer for its planned 200-megawatt Top of the World wind farm in Converse County.

PacifiCorp, which operates as Rocky Mountain Power in Wyoming, has signed a 20-year power purchase agreement for the wind farm's full 200-megawatt output, which is expected to go on line by the end of 2010.

"We are pleased to enter into this long-term power purchase agreement and expect it to greatly benefit our customers," said Richard Walje, president of Rocky Mountain Power.

The Top of the World project is planned for about 17,000 acres of private and public land held under long-term lease by Duke Energy north of Glenrock. The company expects construction to begin in late 2009 or early 2010, with plans to erect at least 66 General Electric 1.5-megawatt turbines. At least 44 other turbines would be built as well.

Already under construction by Duke Energy north of Glenrock in Converse County is the Campbell Hill wind farm, a 99-megawatt, 66-turbine project. PacifiCorp had previously contracted to buy all of the electrical output from that wind farm.

Rocky Mountain Power, a regulated utility in six Western states, has built or acquired more than 1,100 megawatts of wind-fueled electrical generation in recent years -- much of it coming from Wyoming.

"We are on track to achieve our planning objective of having 2,000 megawatts of renewable generating capability in place by 2013," Walje said.

The companies noted that Top of the World would be located outside Gov. Dave Freudenthal's "core areas" sage grouse protection areas.

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