

Wind farm construction to begin May 15

by Carol Crump
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The 50 or so neighbors who came to the Chevron Global Gas community meeting on April 28 at Evansville School seemed to enjoy the barbecue.

Unfortunately for the county's first wind farm project, the free food just wasn't enough to win any support for Chevron's plans.

An aggressive timeline that is scheduled to begin on May 15 would have the project up and generating power by the first of next year. A workforce of approximately 110 people at the peak of construction will work five days a week, from 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. to reach the goal.

Chevron still is working out the details of a traffic plan with the Wyoming Department of Transportation. A traffic study that Natrona County has required before a building permit will be issued should be done by the end of the week.

Between the project's start in May and into June, roadwork, including a possible widening of the intersection, will be done to the site's access roads off Cole Creek Road.

From the first of July to August, concrete foundations for the towers will be poured and electric lines run. Each foundation will contain 30 truckloads of concrete.

Turbine delivery will begin the first week of August and last for approximately two weeks. Each of the 11 turbines will come in three pieces on 10 trucks.

Part of the traffic plan that Chevron has worked out with WYDOT requires the flatbed trailers that will haul the turbines to exit the interstate at the Glenrock exit and drive through the town on the Old Yellowstone Highway to a staging area at Hat Six Travel Plaza.

The circuitous route through Glenrock is necessary because the Hat Six interchange will be closed this summer for construction, according to site manager Chris Buchholz.

Chevron's representatives are waiting to meet with Glenrock's officials until the WYDOT traffic plan is complete.

Assembly of the turbines will begin Aug. 15 and continue until October, when testing and inspection will start. Final testing and tie-in to the electric grid will happen in November.

"We'll shoot renewable power into the grid" in December, Commercial Development Manager Bill Reese told the meeting attendees.

Whether Chevron will be able to meet the projected start date and timeline still depends on the company, the county and Seventh District Court.

The county had 60 days to file information with the court in response to a citizens' petition to invalidate the conditional use permits for the proposed wind farm on the former Evansville refinery site.

The county already has questioned the timeliness of the protest.

The court has 30 days to review information from all of the parties and decide whether to dismiss the petition or certify it to the Wyoming Supreme Court.

Chevron also needs to complete a traffic study and a bonding agreement before the county will issue a building permit.

"There are just a lot of gray areas," the petitioners' attorney, Michael McGrady, told the Casper Journal.