

Wind project promises jobs

By The Associated Press
Sunday, April 12, 2009 2:06 AM MDT

RAWLINS -- The Power Co. of Wyoming says the construction and operation of two major wind farms in south-central Wyoming will create more than 1,000 jobs, most of them temporary construction jobs.

The company, which is a subsidiary of the Denver-based Anschutz Corp., is moving forward with plans to build 1,000 wind turbines near Rawlins. The 325-turbine Sierra Madre project and 675-turbine Chokecherry project are expected to produce between 2,000 and 3,000 megawatts, the company said.

Power Co. of Wyoming Vice President Roxane Perruso told the Carbon County Commission this week that two wind farms will be built in three phases.

"We've found out we have world-class winds on property Mr. Anschutz already owns," Perruso said, referring to Anschutz's Overland Trail Cattle Co. near Saratoga.

Perruso said the company expects to employ nearly 1,300 people during the peak of construction and more than 100 operational and administrative positions once construction is complete. That doesn't include potentially thousands of more jobs that would be indirectly created by the development, she said.

Perruso said the project would be valued at between \$4 billion and \$6 billion when fully built. The project would generate between \$28 million and \$42 million in tax revenue for Carbon County during the first year of operation of all three phases.

Terry Weickum, chairman of the Carbon County Commission, said depreciation would reduce tax receipts over time.

Perruso said the company hopes to begin the three-year construction project in 2011. The Bureau of Land Management office is working on a draft environmental impact statement for the projects.

To carry power from the wind farms to the southwestern United States, the Anschutz Corp. plans to build a \$3 billion power line called the TransWest Express Transmission line.

Perruso said the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission plans to begin the process of environmental work on the proposed route of the line and establishing public need for the project with meetings this summer.

Perruso said the company proposes to build a 600-kilovolt direct-current line capable of carrying 3,000 megawatts of power. The lines would be attached to steel lattice towers.