

Wyoming among top states adding wind power

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Wyoming added 170 megawatts of wind energy capacity over the summer, ranking it fifth in the nation in the amount of increased wind power.

The American Wind Energy Association, a U.S. trade group, said Texas led with 436 new megawatts of wind power installed from July through September, and was followed by Oregon with 251, Illinois with 201, and Colorado with 174.

Wyoming remains a small player in wind energy with a total installed capacity of 986 megawatts.

Texas leads the nation with 8,797 megawatts, followed by Iowa with 3,053 and California with 2,787.

"There's a lot of support for wind in Iowa," said Elizabeth Salerno, director of industry data and analysis for the American Wind Energy Association. "There's a lot of support from the top. And the landowners love it."

Salerno said a program to build a transmission system to carry power from wind farms in western Texas across the state has helped spur wind energy there.

"Now the project developers don't have to worry about building a project but not having transmission," she said. "They know what the plan looks like, they know where the transmission will be, and so now they can go ahead and build their projects."

Margaret Oler, a spokeswoman for Rocky Mountain Power, said wind power is available about a third of the time, meaning it lacks the flexibility to meet fluctuations in power demand.

"The thing to remember is that electricity must be generated at the same moment that it is used," she said. "And so as consumer demand for electricity goes up and down, the total system has to respond to that."

The association said the 1,649 megawatts of capacity installed from July through September _ enough to serve the equivalent of 480,000 average households _ was about 18 percent more than the year-ago quarter.

Total wind power in the United States, the association said, is more than 31,000 megawatts, enough to power nearly 9 million homes.