

The Oklahoma WinCharger

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(A Newsletter for Oklahoma Wind Stakeholders)

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Oklahoma Wind Power Initiative

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Current OWPI Funding to End Summer '02

Since beginning in July 2000, the Oklahoma Wind Power Initiative's focus has been on providing valuable policy, resource and economic information to policy makers, landowners, potential wind energy investors and, in general, the citizens of Oklahoma. Some important means to achieving this goal have been through building a network of stakeholders, sharing information with this group (via the WinCharger, for example) and providing forums for education and exchange of ideas. Funding for our work - US DOE State Energy Program money administered by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, with additional funding provided by the Oklahoma State Senate (thanks to Senator Kevin Easley) - ends in June 2002. We hope to continue and expand upon OWPI's objectives in the years to come, but we cannot do so without funding support.

For our readers who are already aware of OWPI's accomplishments and feel this program deserves continued support, we would appreciate your help in letting your legislators know how you feel. While federal and NGO funding opportunities are available and we **will** continue to explore these options, it is important to have a base of support within our own state. This base will form a stable operation from which we can leverage non-state resources and it will further demonstrate to federal agencies our state's dedication to explore our emerging wind power opportunities.

To recap OWPI's achievements since July 2000:

Outreach:

- Developed educational materials such as this newsletter, brochures, tutorials, landowner information, posters, etc.
- Planned and raised funding for the 2001 Wind Power and 2002 Wind Power and Bioenergy Conferences.
- Took a lead role in the formation of the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Council (OREC).
- Established web sites to aid in OWPI and OREC outreach.
- Presented information about wind power at town meetings, conferences, workshops, etc.
- Networked Oklahomans with interest in wind power - the OWPI/OREC database contains over 800 stakeholders and is growing every day.

Wind Resource Assessment:

- Generated maps of Oklahoma's wind resource.
- Installed one 131-ft wind-measuring tower and several 66-ft towers for tribal groups.
- Developed wind climate products in order to yield baseline data for wind farm developers.
- Provided assessment assistance to Oklahoma landowners and potential investors.

Economic and Policy Assessment:

- Estimated scope and economics of Oklahoma wind farms.
- Reviewed other states' policies to encourage wind power development.
- Distributed wind power information to legislators, staffers and other key persons.

External Funding/Benefits Acquired:

- Obtained U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) funds to install wind assessment towers (66 ft) on Oklahoma tribal lands.
- Obtained U.S. DOE funding for wind power conferences and outreach activities.
- Received wind monitoring equipment from the Plains Organization for Wind Energy Resources (POWER) to install in Oklahoma; selection was largely due to OWPI's presence.

By establishing a program that will continue for three or more years, OWPI expects to fully maintain the momentum gained through its accomplishments during the first two years. In the next three years, OWPI will target these objectives:

- Improve resource assessment and information sharing.
- Expand upon economic and policy/incentive studies.
- Provide more outreach to enhance public and private sectors' understanding of wind power.
- Explore development of K12 science curricula based around wind power.
- Promote research activities at the state universities in order to attract industry.
- Seek federal and foundation funding by leveraging state funding.
- Help Oklahoma economic groups attract new related industries.
- Promote development of wind farms by Oklahoma companies and cooperative owners.

As you can see, there is much potential for future work. Please lend your support so OWPI can continue to benefit Oklahoma citizens.

The Effect of RPSs on Household Electric Bills

A Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a policy that calls for retail suppliers of electricity to include some fixed percentage of their energy from renewable resources. Several RPS programs have been adopted throughout the U.S.; the most notable is in Texas, which has rapidly increased its renewable energy production since the passage of the RPS. Recently, there was concern that the RPS proposed in Oklahoma House Bill 2376 would significantly increase electric bills for customers. HB2376, introduced by Representative James Covey (District 57), did not make it out of the

House Committee on Energy and Utility Regulation. However, several studies conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientist (UCS), the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), and the Energy Information Administration (EIA) have shown that increases, if any, would be small. At the same time, the RPS stimulates rural economic and technological development through creation of jobs, additional taxes from developers, construction services, wind royalties, and more.

In Nebraska, for example, the UCS conducted a RPS cost analysis study for households using non-electric heat and on average 500 kWh of electricity per month (i.e., typical households). The study describes low cost and high cost scenarios. In short, the high cost scenario does not take into account federal tax incentives, while the low cost scenario does. Under the low cost scenario, UCS estimated that the RPS in Nebraska would save electricity customers \$12.5 million per year over 20 years. This equates to a net savings of approximately 19¢ per month on electric bills. UCS estimated the RPS under the high-cost scenario would cost Nebraska ratepayers approximately \$34 million over the same 20-year period, or an additional 59¢ per month on electric bills.

A similar study conducted for the state of Iowa showed analogous results. For the high cost scenario, UCS estimated that the RPS in Iowa would cost ratepayers 68¢ per month more on electric bills over a 15-year period. On the other hand, a low cost scenario by AWEA demonstrated that the RPS could save Iowa ratepayers \$300 million dollars over a 25-year period. This is equal to a savings of 28¢ per month on electric bills for a typical household.

Even under the high cost scenario, the monthly electric bill for typical households in Nebraska and Iowa would increase by less than \$1 per month over the next 15 to 20 years. According to a national survey by Research/Strategy/Management Inc., a majority of ratepayers are willing to pay more than \$2 per month for renewable energy; a value significantly larger than the estimates under high-cost scenarios. Consequently, most households will not view the RPS as a burden. Moreover, renewable energy diversifies the electricity mix and helps to restrain the growth of natural gas prices. A recent EIA study regarding a hypothetical RPS at

the federal level showed that stabilized natural gas prices could easily offset cost increases incurred under the high-cost RPS scenarios. Therefore, over 10 or more years, an RPS could actually save Oklahoma ratepayers millions of dollars on electric bills. When balanced against the economic benefits from technology development, extra funds for schools, job creation, royalties, income for construction services, and more, even an added cost in the short term will pay dividends to Oklahomans.

Editor's Note: Much of the above has been obtained from the Union of Concerned Scientists. For more information on the assumptions made for the low and high cost estimates please refer to www.ucsusa.org/energy/strongwinds.pdf.

Oklahoma Sustainability Network Conference

The Oklahoma Sustainability Network (OSN) will hold its first conference, “*Sustainable Solutions: Envisioning Oklahoma’s Future*”, on Friday, May 10th from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Those in business, industry and government, and citizens interested in sustainable solutions for Oklahoma, will want to attend this event.

Conference topics will include:

- Building and Construction
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Transportation / Energy / Wind Power
- Waste Reduction
- Water Conservation
- Sustainable Education

OSN serves as an instrument to connect those concerned about and working towards sustainability in Oklahoma. Renewable energy practices, such as wind power, are considered sustainable technologies, and Mike Bergey, President of Bergey Windpower Co., will speak on this topic. Other invited speakers include Steve Largent, U.S. Congressman (1st District), and Dr. Jim Horne, President of The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, a cosponsor of the April 11th wind/bioenergy conference.

This conference will be held at the Oklahoma City campus of Oklahoma State University, 900 N. Portland Ave. For more information, visit www.oksustainability.org, or contact Jay Yowell at (405) 232-9554 or jyowell@e-a-a.com

April 11th Conference Agenda Shaping Up

The "2002 *Wind Power and Bioenergy: Oklahoma Crops of the 21st Century*" conference will be held on April 11th at the Myriad Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City, and will feature informative talks on wind power and bioenergy related issues and prospects for economic development through these emerging technologies. A tutorial workshop on wind power is also offered on April 10th, 1:30 to 4:00 pm, for the beginner to learn the basics about wind energy. Basic registration fees are \$25 for individuals and \$75 for professionals. Discounts are available for students and senior citizens. (Please register by April 1 to avoid an additional late fee.)

This year’s conference will feature 3 tracks, with breakout sessions on utility scale wind, small wind, bioenergy, and programs for American Indians, Black Farmers, and Communities of Color.

The keynote speaker will be David Garman, US DOE Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Oklahoma’s Secretary of the Environment, Brian Griffin, will also speak in the morning session. Invited speakers also include W. Arthur Porter, State Secretary of Science and Technology; Dennis Howard, State Secretary of Agriculture; State Representative James Covey; and many experts from the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, and the private sector.

The conference web site can be found at www.conferencepros.com/conferences/windpower. For those without access to the web, please call the National Conference Logistics Center at 405-325-3760 for more information, to request a registration form, or to leave your address to ensure you receive a registration brochure by mail.

Reminder: Panhandle Wind Energy Conference

An educational conference on wind energy will occur Thursday, March 21st in the Oklahoma panhandle city of Guymon. The conference is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Texas County Activity Center and wrap up by 3 p.m. The registration fee of \$20 includes lunch. To register, contact PREDCI at predci@ptsi.net or call 580-338-8500 (see the February WinCharger for more).

Calendar of Coming Events

- Mar. 12** **Regional BioEnergy Workshop**, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Redlands Community College, El Reno, OK. See February issue for more information.
- Mar. 13** Meeting of the **Oklahoma Renewable Energy Council**, 10 a.m. to noon, OSU - Tulsa Campus, Tulsa Room in the "Bookstore Building" (www.seic.okstate.edu/orec).
- Mar. 21** **Panhandle Region Wind Energy Conference**, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Texas Co. Activity Ctr., Guymon, OK. See inside issue for more information.
- Apr. 10** **Wind Power Tutorial Workshop**, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City. See inside issue for more information.
- Apr. 11** "**Wind Power and Bioenergy: Oklahoma Crops of the 21st Century**" Conference, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City. See inside issue for more info, or visit www.conferencepros.com/conferences/windpower
- Apr. 17** Meeting of the **Oklahoma Renewable Energy Council**, 10 a.m. to noon, location TBA. See later issues or www.seic.okstate.edu/orec for updates.
- May 10** "**Sustainable Solutions: Envisioning Oklahoma's Future**", 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., OSU - OKC Extension, 900 N. Portland Ave. See inside issue for more info.

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