

NextEra Energy will buy and build a 60-megawatt wind farm in Kay County under a partnership with utility Oklahoma Gas & Electric to supply power to Oklahoma State University's main campus for 20 years. Construction on the Blackwell Wind Farm should be completed by late 2012 and will employ about 150 workers during that time, officials said. Ongoing wind farm operations will include three full-time positions. New York-based OwnEnergy helped develop the Blackwell project with Kay County landowners over the past three years. OG&E and OSU recently signed a 20-year deal to provide wind-generation power to the Stillwater campus, enabling the university to eventually retire its cogeneration facility. "The signing of this agreement with OG&E is part of our overarching sustainability initiative aimed at saving money, reducing carbon emissions and improving efficiency," OSU President Burns Hargis said in a statement. "Blackwell's unique location in north central Oklahoma is advantageous for both OG&E and OSU in that it combines a strong wind resource with an existing transmission grid."

NextEra, based in Florida, is considered the nation's largest renewable energy generator with 43,000 megawatts capacity installed. New York-based OwnEnergy works with landowners and wind generation firms by leasing land, obtaining permitting, undertaking environmental studies and working with potential end users. OwnEnergy also will receive royalty payments through the life of the project. The deal still needs approval from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. Oklahoma ranked eighth nationwide in wind generation with 1,482 megawatts installed capacity, according to the American Wind Energy Association's 2010 year-end market report. The nation's full capacity now tops 40,000 megawatts.