

## Wind turbine farms provide ecomomic boom to region but still draw controversy

December 21, 2009 | Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA) Author: Denise Allabaugh (Staff Writer)| Section: News| 1231 Words OpenURL Link

Watching the blades spin on a dozen wind turbines atop Bald Mountain in Bear Creek Township, wind park project manager Todd Solliday sees the future.

"We need additional renewable resources like wind and solar versus relying strictly on fossil fuels or oil," Solliday said. "Wind is not going to take the place of other forms of generation, but it needs to be part of a balanced portfolio."

Wind farms have been proposed throughout Northeast ern Pennsylvania and the U.S. Department of Energy aims to have wind turbines produce 5 percent of electricity in 2010.

Yet they continue to fuel controversy. While advocates tout wind turbines as a clean source of electricity, critics denounce them as unsightly monstrosities that dominate landscapes and endanger birds and bats.

Among the other proposed projects in Northeast Pennsylvania:

- > Residents in Butler Township, Schuylkill County, have opposed a proposal by Broad Mountain Development Co. LLC to locate 27 wind turbines in the Fountain Springs area. Residents cited health concerns, possible environmental damage and harm to the natural beauty of the area as reasons for their opposition.
- > BP Alternative Energy's construction of a wind farm with up to 87 turbines in the southwestern part of Wyoming County was put on hold. The wind farm, which would encompass 14,861 acres in Eaton, Noxen, Forkston and Mehoopany townships, received preliminary approval last November from the Wyoming County Planning Commission, despite concerns from residents about the turbines "polluting" the atmosphere. Construction is expected to generate about 200 jobs.
- > Electric City Wind Power Corp., which plans to manufacture and market wind turbines in Northeast Pennsylvania, sold three 1-megawatt turbine systems to Scranton architect John Gianacopoulos who heads a group of investors involved in a \$5.8 million deal. A location has not yet been pinpointed in the region, but the architect hopes to have the turbines turning in 2010.

The environmental advantages of wind turbines are many, said Mary Wells, spokeswoman for Florida-based NextEra Energy Resources, which owns and operates the 43 wind turbines in Waymart, Wayne County. The wind turbines have been operating there since 2003.

"The wind is renewable and won't run out," Wells said. "No water resources are used in the generation of electricity from the wind. No pollution is emitted into the air or water and land use continues as before. Whether the land is used for crops, livestock, logging, mining, hunting or other recreational uses, those uses continue."

The 213-feet-tall turbines are capable of generating enough electricity to power more than 21,000 homes, according to NextEra Energy Resources. They also add to the Wayne County tax base, Wells said. Each year, Wayne County collects \$21,217 in taxes from the wind energy center while the Western Wayne School District collects \$90,577 and Forest City School District collects \$9,440. Of the 43 turbines, 39 are in Western Wayne School District and four are in Forest City.

"In general terms, every wind turbine provides the assessment of approximately a medium-size house," said Wayne County Commissioner Anthony Herzog. "A lot of people like to look at them. A lot of people notice them and think

they're very interesting."

The Bear Creek wind turbines, which are 256-feet-tall and also built in 2003, also have resulted in positive economic and environmental impacts in Luzerne County, said Solliday.

Electricity generated by the wind farm can power 4,730 homes per year, he said. The electricity wind farms produce annually offsets the amount of carbon dioxide produced by coal, petroleum and natural gas, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Australia-based Infigen Energy, New York-based-CH Energy Group and Radnor-based Community Energy now own and operate the Bear Creek wind farm. Bluarc Management Group LLC manages the wind farm.

Bear Creek Township receives \$36,000, or \$3,000 for each of the 12 turbines, annually, said township Supervisor Gary Zingaretti.

"We definitely benefited as a community from the compensation we get from the windmills," he said.

Solliday is often contacted about offering tours of the wind turbines on the private land. In the future, he predicts growth in the field of green technology will continue to explode.

The wind turbines are just a small example of what's possible, he said.

"This industry has a lot of growth potential," he said.

Others, such as Henry Smith Jr., past board member of Defend Our Watershed, have a different opinion about wind turbines.

Smith opposed Energy Unlimited Inc.'s plan to put up 34 more wind turbines near Crystal Lake in Bear Creek Township, a proposal tied up in a battle over zoning rules. He expressed concerns about the environmental impact of building a wind farm on the land.

"In Pennsylvania, with our limited wind resources, it seems to create destruction of our mountaintops and pristine areas without really a meaningful output of energy," Smith said.

Wind turbines also kill birds and bats and push animals away from the land, he said. Just last week a federal judge in Maryland halted the expansion of a West Virginia wind farm, saying its massive turbines would kill endangered Indiana bats. That lawsuit was the first court challenge to wind power under the Endangered Species Act.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has agreements with wind farm operators in Pennsylvania to work together to avoid, minimize and potentially mitigate any adverse impacts on wildlife, said spokesman Jerry Feaser. The agreements include protocols for monitoring bird and bat populations.

Solliday points to studies from consultants Curry and Kerlinger that found wind turbines kill fewer birds than house cats, glass windows, automobiles and trucks, land development, hunting, communication towers, oil and gas extraction, logging and strip mining do.

"As far as wind turbines go, they are very low on the list in killing wildlife," Solliday said.

Adam Garber, field director for PennEnvironment, a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization, said windmill operators should try to minimize damage to the environment but other sources of energy like coal-fired power plants kill more wildlife.

"We need to use more wind energy in Pennsylvania to reduce our pollution and cut our dependence on coal-fired power plants," Garber said. "We should cite them responsibly to preserve the environment but in the end, the

damage caused by global warming and pollution in general is going to be more severe."

When looking the scope of energy sources available, wind is one of the "benign sources of electricity that we are able to get," said Christine Real de Azua, spokeswoman for the American Wind Energy Association, a national trade association representing wind power project developers, equipment suppliers, services providers, parts manufacturers, utilities, researchers and others involved in the fast-growing wind industry.

AWEA, with more than 2,400 members and advocates, promotes wind energy as a clean source of electricity for consumers around the world.

"There are no emissions," Real de Azua said, adding that although wind turbines are tall, they leave a "very light footprint" on the overall landscape. "The bottom line is we need to get our electricity from somewhere. One of the best ways to get it, not just from an environmental point of view but from an economic view, is from renewable energy source like wind."

The cost to consumers who use wind as an energy source is not going to go up over time because there is no cost of fuel, she added.

"Over time, it will protect customers when they need it the most, when fuel prices go up," she said. "The more wind and renewable energy sources in the electricity mix, the less likely the cost will go up because of fuel prices."

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## Wind power surging on tax credit

August 17, 2008 | Bucks County Courier Times (Levittown, PA) Author: John Anastasi | Section: LOCAL | 730 Words Page: 1

OpenURL Link

Extension of a federal wind energy production tax credit could help Pennsylvania meet its wind energy goals.

BY JOHN ANASTASI

STAFF WRITER

Pennsylvania's alternative energy goal - to get 18 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2021 - calls for 3,000 to 4,000 megawatts of that energy to come from wind farms.

Currently the state is getting about 300 MW from wind. So to hit the goal, the number of wind farms that dot the Appalachian ridge tops needs to go up more than tenfold.

"A lot of companies are ramping up, including Gamesa," said Kerry Campbell, state energy program specialist, referring to the Spanish wind turbine manufacturer that made Falls its U.S. headquarters in 2006. "Many of the major manufacturers of wind turbines, generators and blades are sold out for years in advance. It's a world market, too."

To encourage creation of U.S. wind farms, the federal government offers a 10-year income tax credit on wind production to companies that establish wind farms. The wind farms earn a tax credit of 2 cents per kilowatt-hour produced.

Assuming that a 40-turbine wind farm with a capacity of 80 MW runs at 30 percent capacity, it would produce roughly 200 million kilowatt-hours of energy per year. That equates to an annual tax credit of approximately \$4 million per year for 10 years.

The Production Tax Credit is set to expire at the end of the year, however, and wind energy advocates want it extended as soon as Congress reconvenes.

"This means that for all projects in the pipeline for next year, it's not clear if they qualify for the credit," said Christine Real de Azua, spokeswoman for the Washington, D.C.-based American Wind Energy Association. "That's important to know when they go to try to get financing."

Though the credit goes to wind farm owners, it benefits turbine manufacturers like Gamesa as well.

"If there are no wind projects, they aren't buying [from manufacturers]," she said. "It has an indirect effect on the whole supply chain."

Although Gamesa is sold out on turbine orders until 2010, spokesman Michael Peck said the company is watching the fate of the tax credit with interest.

"With ... uncertainty increasing every day, financial lenders are hesitating to provide capital for wind projects," Peck said in a statement. "Concurrently, developers rush to complete projects before the expiration, leading to smaller projects and added costs."

Real de Azua said the credit typically needs to be renewed every two years. It has lapsed for a series of months

three times in the last 10 years - in 1999, 2001 and 2003. Each time, the lapse prompted a significant drop in new capacity being installed, she said.

There seems to be bipartisan support for extending the credit again, but Real de Azua said the American Wind Energy Association is pushing for a five-year extension this time to ensure stability in the industry and calm the fears of lenders as to its long-term viability.

"Renewable energy is a bright spot in the economy today," said Real de Azua, who added that a slowdown could threaten jobs.

Peck said the American wind energy market is "extremely strong right now" due to demand for cleaner forms of electricity and alternative energy incentives like the Production Tax Credit.

"Gamesa supports a long-term extension of the PTC because of the vital role it plays in long-term development," Peck said. "Companies are mapping out their decisions for future wind projects, and the PTC directly affects those decisions."

Campbell said a long-term extension could encourage more companies to establish wind farms in Pennsylvania and other states.

Wind farms can be located only in places where winds average at least 15 mph throughout the year. The high elevations in Pennsylvania's mountainous regions rank it 22nd in the nation in terms of wind power potential, according to the association.

It currently ranks 16th in the country for existing capacity, due to the development of wind farms in Somerset, Cambria, Blair, Schuylkill and Wayne counties over the last decade.

"There are four more planned to be completed this year that would add another 272 megawatts," said Campbell.

Those include the Allegheny Ridge II wind farm in Cambria and Blair counties, which Gamesa is developing itself. Gamesa's turbines are being used at the original Allegheny Ridge site plus the Locust Ridge Wind Farm in Schuylkill County and the Bear Creek Wind Project in Luzerne County.

John Anastasi can be reached at 215-949-4170 or at janastasi@phillyBurbs.com.

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## Wind power surging in Pennsylvania

August 17, 2008 | Intelligencer, The (Doylestown, PA) Author: John Anastasi | Section: BUSINESS LOCAL | 719 Words OpenURL Link

Wind power surging in Pennsylvania

By John Anastasi

STAFF WRITER

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## Mystery cylinders part of new energy

August 1, 2008 | Morning Call, The (Allentown, PA) Author: Dan Hartzell Of The Morning Call | Section: Local | 697 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

Road Warrior appears Mondays and Fridays. E-mail questions about roadways, traffic and transportation to hartzell@mcall.com

Q. In recent months, huge open-ended cylinders have been transported past my house on Route 313, going east and west, sometimes three in succession, with police escorts. What is the purpose of these cylinders, and what company has the capacity to manufacture these giants?

Marita Lyons

Quakertown

On a daily basis, trucks with oversize loads go by our house on Route 313. They are usually very large pipes, maybe 15 feet in diameter, while others are large, enclosed rectangles. What are these things and where are they going? On two occasions lines were ripped off the utility poles in front of our house.

Sandra Simitz

East Rockhill Township

Can you solve the mystery of the multiple "long white tubes' that have been transported on Route 309 over the past year? They appear to be 20 to 30 feet long and up to 10 feet in diameter. My husband thinks they may be components for towers for a wind farm; that's kind of what they look like.

Karen Norwillo

**Upper Saucon Township** 

A. The husband is always right, Karen, and this case is no exception.

The massive steel cylinders will become the towers supporting electric-generating wind turbines, helping map our route to greater energy independence.

Spanish wind-to-energy company Gamesa Technological Corp. began manufacturing the towers and other components at the former U.S. Steel Fairless Hills plant in Falls Township, Bucks County, two years ago.

The \$34 million facility makes towers, blades, and "nacelles," or the turbine enclosures that sit atop the towers, said Gamesa spokesman Kurt Knaus.

Based in Madrid, Gamesa's U.S. headquarters are in Philadelphia, and the company also has a plant in Ebensburg, Cambria County, north of Johnstown.

The wide-load permits the company uses to transport the components suggest the trucks you folks are seeing on the roads in Bucks basically are running between the Fairless Hills and Ebensburg plants.

"They're transporting parts from one facility of theirs to another," said PennDOT spokeswoman Jennifer Robinson.

Knaus said the components eventually are destined for "wind farms being developed in Pennsylvania and West Virginia," declining to be more specific. He would not divulge the names of customers, calling such information proprietary.

When fully assembled, the towers being made at Fairless Hills are 250 feet tall, and each of the three carbon-fiber blades is 140 feet long. The distance from ground level to the tip of a blade in vertical position is 404 feet, according to information supplied by the company.

The tubular design of the steel tower provides access to the nacelle and the transmission and generator inside it, and also is intended to reduce noise and eliminate bird-nest locations, according to the company.

Each wind turbine, with a 2-megawatt generator, can power 500 to 600 homes, Knaus said.

The Warrior is aware of at least one of Gamesa's previous customers. Community Energy Inc. uses 12 of the company's 2-megawatt turbines at its Bear Creek Wind Farm in Bear Creek Township, Luzerne County, southeast of Wilkes-Barre.

The wind farm has an Allentown connection: PPL Energy Plus purchases all of the power from the 24 megawatt facility, which can be seen from the southbound Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Gamesa's Fairless Hills complex covers 20 acres and employs more than 700 people. The company is one of the world's leading suppliers of wind turbines. That's the kind of company with the capacity to manufacture these giants, Marita - one that's taken over a property formerly owned by the world's biggest steelmaker, a one-time symbol of American industrial might.

Somehow we let that kind of international leadership slip away in many industries. Perhaps our quest for more wind power and other alternate energy sources can help us steer our way back to the main road.

Road Warrior appears Mondays and Fridays. E-mail questions about roadways, traffic and transportation to hartzell@mcall.com. Please include your name and the municipality where you live. Or, write to Road Warrior, The Morning Call, 101 N. Sixth St., Allentown, PA 18101-1480.

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Dan Hartzell Of The Morning Call, 'Mystery cylinders part of new energy', *Morning Call, The* (online), 1 Aug 2008 B1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1225065FA17FF938">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1225065FA17FF938</a>



## **Everhart Spreads Its Wings For Anniversary**

January 31, 2008 | Electric City (Scranton, PA) Author: Alicia Grega-Pikul| Section: Arts And Entertainment | 933 Words OpenURL Link

Bird songs wake us in the morning as the sun rises. They tell us, in the case of the robin, that spring is on the way. Or provide a cardinal red flash of cheer in the middle of a cold, drab winter. Who hasn't stood looking skyward in stunned silence as an impressive flock of birds travels in graceful unison, following paths older than most human civilizations? Or said thanks for a turkey-centered feast?

Yet, we tend to forget about the role birds play in our lives, even as many species of migratory birds, in particular, are facing extinction due to the havoc humans have caused the environment, Everhart Museum curator Nezka Pfeier recently reminded.

In honor of its 100th anniversary, the Scranton institution will draw our attention to the contributions birds have made and the collection of some 2,000 stuffed birds ornithologist Dr. Isaiah Everhart donated to establish the museum

Opening on Feb. 1, a temporary exhibition titled "Flocks and Feathers" will offer much more than the museum's familiar permanent exhibition of dioramas and more than 200 stuffed birds.

"Just as the museum grew from its focus on science to include art and history and culture, we actually decided to apply those three disciplines and use the diversity of the museum's collection to highlight birds in the world," explained curator Nezka Pfeier.

"It really is amazing how ancient birds are as a feature in human art and object. Even before the ancient Egyptians, people were painting birds on those caves in Europe."

In addition to the 30 bird specimens brought out from storage, Flocks and Feathers features some 50 cultural objects either made with bird parts (i.e. feathers, skulls, etc.) or depicting birds. Items on loan include bird feather jewelry and work by several national, mostly contemporary, artists.

"We actually have a wonderful little print that's in our collection by Joan Miro the Spanish surrealist artist. It's a diminutive piece but it's really a great example of the ... manner birds are often used as metaphor."

A Seattle-based glass artist actually donated one of his three artworks on display to the Everhart's permanent collection, she informed.

"It features something called Marbled Murrelets in flight, and the Murrelet is actually an endangered bird."

Among the activities planned in conjunction with the exhibition are a Community Day with hands-on activities and tours March 30 and the local observance of World Migratory Bird Day on May 10.

"The program highlights the pressures and the perils that face migratory birds every season they fly back and forth from their nesting grounds to their wintering grounds, including environmental changes and pollution and continually decreasing resources," Pfeifer said

Also opening on Feb. 1 in the museum's Gallery One is a notably scientific collection of research and documentation of migratory birds known to travel through Northeastern Pennsylvania. "In the Field" presents information on the fitness of bird populations and their behavior and diet collected by local biologist and volunteers from the Audubon Society largely in Lackawanna State Park.

Lanning connects with area's past

The approximately 15 large framed works, several composed of multiple panels fused together, on display in Bruce Lanning's new solo show Back Track were assembled over a period of 15 years.

The title not only evokes the train lines abundant on our local landscape, but "our inescapable link to the past," the Wilkes-Barre native suggested.

"As an artist, you can't escape your roots. No matter how much you try to change, you always go back to some of the same imagery."

The exhibit opens Friday at the University of Scranton with a lecture by the artist in Brennan Hall at 5 p.m. and a reception in the Hope Horn Gallery from 6 to 8 p.m. It will remain on display through March 14.

While long cognizant of the region's local history, Lanning didn't particularly care much for railroads until his son, now six, displayed enthusiasm.

"It's a good excuse for a hike - to follow a railroad bed. And it's the trend now to change old beds into hiking trails." The one depicted in his work "Above the Tubs," isn't exactly user friendly, he said, but the fact that it connects Wilkes-Barre to Mountain Top, where he currently resides is symbolically intriguing.

"I was thinking about that railroad bed from my youth. I remember when we would party at the Tubs before it was kept clean and nice like it is now and I remember seeing the trains going up there. And last year I took a hike and found the place, way up there, on the old abandoned line. I started to think about the past and the present when a cicada suddenly hopped out and landed on a branch next to me and I turned my head and saw this big Bear Creek wind farm turbine and it was a jolt," he recalled.

"I was coming out of a big tunnel and was up on a high, really sheer cliff looking over the waterfalls and it was kind of unsettling... I thought the turbines were going to be in a totally different direction."

The opportunity to mount "Back Track" arose as a prize Lanning received for his work in the Northeast PA Regional Art biennial juried exhibition.

The EMCA En Plein Air Painters will display work created by its members since forming last spring in a new exhibit opening Sunday and continuing through Feb. 25. Open to all artists, regardless of EMCA membership status, the group adjourns to scenic outdoor locations weekly, usually on Monday afternoons to put down their impressions on the spot. An opening reception will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Endless Mountains Council of the Arts Center in Tunkhannock. Normal gallery hours are Friday through Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Call 836-3622 for more information.

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# PPL Electric Utilities requests OK for new renewable energy rate Company also seeks to begin buying renewable energy credits

January 26, 2008 | News-Item, The (Shamokin, PA) Section: News | 419 Words OpenURL Link

The company has asked the PUC to approve a new PPL Electric Green Power program offered in partnership with Community Energy Inc. (CEI), a leading marketer and developer of renewable energy.

"Customer support for renewable sources of power will help protect the environment, reduce our nation's dependency on fossil fuels, and help ensure that more wind and other renewable generation projects are built," said David G. DeCampli, president of PPL Electric Utilities.

"That's good for the environment today and for future generations that will call eastern and central Pennsylvania home," he said.

DeCampli said the voluntary PPL Electric Green Power option would enable customers to buy 100 kilowatt-hour blocks of renewable energy credits, which are the result of energy generated by wind and hydroelectric projects.

For each block purchased, \$2.50 would be added each month to the customer's regular PPL Electric Utilities bill. PPL Electric Utilities would not profit from those purchases. Rather, the payment for those credits provides a financial incentive to developers to build more renewable energy projects.

"As part of our e-power initiative, we continue to look for ways we can give our customers more tools and options - options for paying their bills and managing their account, tools for learning how they can save electricity and money, and now choices about supporting environmental initiatives," DeCampli said.

The PPL Electric Green Power program must be approved by the PUC.

To implement the program and support continued investment in renewable resources, PPL Electric Utilities will buy approximately 500,000 renewable energy credits over four years from Community Energy Inc.

Those credits represent more than 500 million kilowatt-hours of clean energy, which has the same environmental benefit as adding more than 95,000 acres of forest or taking about 67,000 cars off the road for one year, according to U.S Environmental Protection Agency data.

Any of the 500,000 credits left over following customer purchases would be used by PPL Electric Utilities toward Pennsylvania's alternative energy requirement.

Community Energy Inc. is headquartered in Radnor, and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of IBERDROLA - one of the largest owners and operators of renewable energy facilities in the world. CEI developed and jointly owns the Jersey-Atlantic Wind Farm and the Bear Creek Wind Farm. IBERDROLA has wind projects under development in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwestern and Rocky Mountain states.

PPL Electric Utilities Corporation, a subsidiary of PPL Corporation that provides electricity delivery services to about 1.4 million customers in Pennsylvania, has consistently ranked among the best companies for customer service in the United States. For more information, visit www.pplelectric.com.

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'PPL Electric Utilities requests OK for new renewable energy rate Company also seeks to begin buying renewable energy credits', News-Item, The (online), 26 Jan 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11E6CEF7A34FAC40>



#### PPL FILES FOR ENERGY CREDITS

January 26, 2008 | Times Leader, The (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
Author: RORY SWEENEY rsweeney@timesleader.com| Section: NEWS| 330 Words

Page: 3A OpenURL Link

PPL electricity customers concerned about climate change may soon have an opportunity to help save the environment with \$2.50 and a piece of paper.

PPL Corp. filed a proposal with the state Public Utilities Commission to allow customers to buy renewable energy credits - not actually renewable energy - through renewable energy marketer and developer Community Energy.

The Allentown-based company proposes to acquire about 500,000 credits over four years and offer them to customers in 100-kilowatt-hour blocks for \$2.50. While customers are not actually buying renewable energy, "that money ... goes to support the development of renewable sources electricity," PPL spokesman Ryan Hill said. "Customers will get at the end of the year a certificate saying these credits have been retired on your behalf."

A credit is created when 1 megawatt-hour - or 1,000 kWh - of renewable energy is produced and introduced to the regional power grid, he said. The 500,000 block will come from hydroelectric and wind power.

State law requires that by 2010, 9 percent of a utility's energy portfolio must come from renewable sources, he said, which is tracked by the number of credits a utility owns. PPL will need about 3 million credits to meet the requirement, he said, and the company will put toward that goal the remainder of 500,000 credits not bought by customers. Those credits can be banked for two years, he said. The percentage required will double in a decade.

Though a confidentiality agreement between PPL and Community Energy prohibited him from discussing the actual contract, Hill said PPL would not be profiting on the deal. "It's a strict pass-through," he said.

"It's going to provide an early incentive for renewable energy developers to build renewable energy projects" that customers can't support under PPL's current rate structure, Hill said.

Community Energy, which built the Bear Creek Wind Park on Bald Mountain in Bear Creek Township, offers power in 100-kilowatt-hour blocks at a premium of 2.5 cents per kWh over the rates customers pay utilities.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

RORY SWEENEY rsweeney@timesleader.com, 'PPL FILES FOR ENERGY CREDITS', *Times Leader, The* (online), 26 Jan 2008 3A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11EAB89986313868">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11EAB89986313868</a>



## PPL proposes green choices for electric customers

January 24, 2008 | Intelligencer Journal (Lancaster, PA) Author: Patrick Burns Intelligencer Journal Staff| Section: A | 426 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

PPL Electric Utilities wants to know how much its customers truly care about clean, renewable energy.

The utility filed a proposal Wednesday with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to allow customers to voluntarily purchase renewable energy credits, or RECs.

The credits are generated when a wind farm or hydroelectric project somewhere puts a block of clean electricity into the power grid.

Through the PPL Electric Green Power program, PPL would buy about 500,000 renewable energy credits over four years from Radnor-based Community Energy Inc., which markets and sells renewable energy credits it generates.

Customers could voluntarily buy 100 kilowatt-hour blocks of renewable energy credits for \$2.50 each. The cash would be added each month to the customer's regular electric bill.

Money raised selling the credits to PPL customers will serve as a financial incentive for Community Energy to build wind and hydroelectric projects in Pennsylvania.

Irwin "Sonny" Popowsky, the state's consumer advocate, supports the program as long as customers understand what they're buying.

"You're not buying power that is directly transmitted to your home from a particular windmill or solar panel," Popowsky said.

Paul Copleman, Community Energy spokesman, said the company operates several clean-energy projects, including the Jersey-Atlantic Wind Farm and the Bear Creek Wind Farm.

"The money PPL customers voluntarily elect to pay in the program not going to buy the renewable energy credit will be turned around and used to help drive the development of the next project," Copleman said.

Community Energy received PUC approval in 2004 for a project with PECO Energy in the Philadelphia area that is similar to the PPL Electric Green Power program.

Popowsky said more than 20,000 PECO customers have purchased renewable energy credits from Community Energy.

Ryan Hill, PPL spokesman, said PPL would not profit from its sale of credits. PPL hopes to receive PUC approval within 60 days and would like to begin selling credits in April.

PPL Electric, which distributes but does not generate electricity, currently purchases no renewable energy. It is locked into a long-term contract with PPL EnergyPlus that expires at the end of 2009.

Pennsylvania's recent Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards legislation will require PPL to supply customers with 9 percent renewable energy, or the equivalent credits, by 2011, Hill said.

"Any of the 500,000 credits left over following customer purchases would be used by PPL toward Pennsylvania's

alternative energy requirement," Hill said.

In what was billed as the largest green power purchase by a state government, Gov. Ed Rendell in 2006 signed a minimum two-year commitment with Community Energy to purchase 200,000 megawatts in renewable energy credits per year.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Patrick Burns Intelligencer Journal Staff, 'PPL proposes green choices for electric customers', *Intelligencer Journal* (online), 24 Jan 2008 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11E6406EED32C530">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11E6406EED32C530</a>



# POWER TRANSMISSION COMPLEX, COSTLY

November 5, 2007 | Times Leader, The (Wilkes-Barre, PA)

Author: RORY SWEENEY rsweeney@timesleader.com | Section: NEWS | 721 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

Perhaps the crowd for the open house at PPL Corp.'s Lake Wallenpaupack hydroelectric dam was an indication. There were old and young people alike, but few in between, suggesting most folks had found other things to do at this lakeside town on an overcast summer day.

That illustrates the public's attitude on electricity production. Consumers want it here on demand as cheaply as possible, but only those inquisitive few care about where it comes from or how it is transmitted.

Consumers, attuned or indifferent, will get bigger electric bills in 2010 when prices in Pennsylvania jump perhaps 35 percent or more. Electricity companies say it's an inevitable reaction to open-market prices that increased during the cap years.

Alert customers might be confused. Wait, they might ask, haven't bills already gone up? Haven't companies already received rate increases?

Indeed, they have because only the generation rate, which accounts for about 40 percent of the total cost, was capped. Utilities have been free to request and receive increases to transmission and distribution rates. This year alone, local provider PPL Electric Utilities has requested increases of about 10 percent. About half of that has already been granted by the state Public Utilities Commission.

## Demand surges

Demand changes constantly, creating spikes that the industry must handle or risk blackouts.

It's not cost effective for generating companies to always generate peak-period amounts, so the industry has created a two-tiered system to handle that demand.

The first tier is large, efficient power plants that create vast amounts of power. The plants are slow to turn on, but run almost continually, forming the backbone of the supply.

The second tier includes small, often automated "peaking" plants that usually run on expensive fuel, but can be turned on almost instantly. They run when demand exceeds the large plants' output.

"The philosophy is entirely different," PPL spokesman George Lewis said. "Those plants are for the most part sitting in wait. If they get the call ... they'd better be able to start."

Electricity is sold by generating companies in an open market through a brokerage organization to utility companies. The brokerage solicits bids from the generating companies, and accepts the lowest ones first.

Generating companies, however, are all paid the highest accepted bid. So when expensive peaking units must be used, utilities pay a premium price for every megawatt.

The rate caps, which began in 1996, have kept customers from feeling that effect.

Also at issue is where plants are located. Because large plants often face opposition, they often are built where few people live.

#### Pa. largest exporter

Pennsylvania exported 70 billion kilowatt-hours in 2006, more than any other state, according to Doug Biden of the Electric Power Generation Association.

All that power gets shipped through high-voltage lines, which themselves often receive opposition.

"I would say it's more difficult to build a transmission line than to build anything else just because of its length," state Consumer Advocate Sonny Popowsky said.

They're also somewhat unreliable. In August 2003, electricity-laden lines in Ohio sagged into a tree, sparking a blackout that crippled the Northeast. And PPL estimates energy lost to heat while traveling on the lines accounts for 9 percent of use.

To control the price shocks that come with relying on one fuel, the industry plans to use a variety of fuels in the future. Politicians are pushing eco-friendly sources.

#### Lines needed

But such plants must go where the fuel is, requiring more transmission lines. Furthermore, their energy-production-to-land-use efficiency is dwarfed by larger, more established plants.

An example: The Susquehanna nuclear plant near Berwick can produce about six times more power per acre than the Bear Creek wind park.

Renewable energy accounts for only 3 percent of total generation in the state, according to Biden.

Legislation might soon make renewable sources more appealing, though. Renewable energy quotas have been passed in some states, including Pennsylvania. More stringent carbon dioxide emissions caps would put heavy economic restrictions on coal plants.

Many officials believe it comes down to personal responsibility.

"We have a society problem where we demand electricity" while complaining about its drawbacks, said Terry Williamson, a spokesman for the brokerage organization PJM Interconnection. "But you've gotta have the juice somewhere."

#### More info

To read Part I of "The power struggle" series, see Sunday's Times Leader or go to www.timesleader.com .

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RORY SWEENEY rsweeney@timesleader.com, 'POWER TRANSMISSION COMPLEX, COSTLY', *Times Leader, The* (online), 5 Nov 2007 1A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11CCBB3B2BA704B0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11CCBB3B2BA704B0</a>



## From refuse to reuse \*\* PPL plant turns garbage into electricity to power homes.

October 4, 2007 | Morning Call, The (Allentown, PA)

Author: Sam Kennedy Of The Morning Call Section: Business 413 Words

Page: D1 OpenURL Link

Garbage is being turned into electricity at a Lebanon County dump where PPL Corp. dedicated a new power plant Wednesday morning.

The plant, fueled by methane gas captured at the dump, produces enough power for 2,500 homes.

It has the added benefit of destroying a particularly powerful greenhouse gas in the process. Methane, a natural byproduct of the decomposition of organic material, is 21 times more potent than the carbon dioxide in automobile exhaust.

"This renewable energy plant will generate electricity in an environmentally friendly way," PPL Renewable Energy President Mike Kroboth said.

The facility, built in partnership with the Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority and activated last month, adds to PPL's "green" portfolio.

PPL Renewable Energy has developed more than 15 megawatts of renewable energy generation -- enough to power 12,000 homes. These include solar panel installations and other landfill gas projects in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

In addition, PPL buys energy from the 24-megawatt Bear Creek wind farm near Wilkes-Barre, and the 26-megawatt Locust Ridge project in Mahanoy City.

The vast majority of PPL's generation, however, still comes from traditional sources, such as coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear power plants. The company controls more than 11,000 megawatts of generation in the United States.

PPL, headquartered in Allentown, also sells electricity in various U.S. markets and delivers power to more than 4 million customers in Pennsylvania and the United Kingdom.

In Lebanon County, PPL is generating electricity at a household garbage dump. Methane, which used to rise to the surface and escape into the air, is now captured in 60 underground wells and channeled through pipes to PPL's onsite generation plant.

There, two massive, yellow Caterpillar engines, housed in a new building, convert the clean-burning fuel into electricity.

The environmental impact is the equivalent of removing 27,000 cars from the road or planting 38,000 acres of new forest, according to PPL.

The building that houses the engines will also be used by the Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority as an education center where school groups and community organizations can learn about renewable energy.

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

Sam Kennedy Of The Morning Call, 'From refuse to reuse \*\* PPL plant turns garbage into electricity to power homes.', *Morning Call, The* (online), 4 Oct 2007 D1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11C17C7D9B1E42C0>



# Green money \*\* Fund supports projects that promote energy efficiency. It has \$22 million in assets.

June 17, 2007 | Morning Call, The (Allentown, PA)
Author: Sam Kennedy Of The Morning Call | Section: BUSINESS | 798 Words
Page: D1
OpenURL Link

After spending most of the decade in relative obscurity, the Sustainable Energy Fund is trying to raise its profile in the Lehigh Valley with a message both simple and alluring.

"[We] sit on a pot of money," said fund project manager Bernie DeBias. "We're right in your back yard."

SEF is a publicly funded nonprofit organization that provides low-interest loans and creative financing for energy-saving environmental projects. It was created through a negotiated settlement between PPL Corp. and the Public Utility Commission, when Pennsylvania deregulated the power industry in 1998.

Funded by an electricity levy on PPL ratepayers, SEF of Central Eastern Pennsylvania has \$22 million in assets. The money has helped erect windmills, install low-voltage traffic-light light-bulbs, build a "green" school and put a solar-heated water system in a physical therapy office.

Those are some the success stories touted by SEF in its annual report. Yet, the overall impact on the 29-county region served by the organization has fallen short of expectations.

In 2000, SEF's first director, Thomas J. Tuffey, spoke of using space technology. He said the organization's goal was to provide by 2010 alternative power for 10 percent to 15 percent of the energy demand in PPL's northeastern territory.

With less than three years left in the decade, however, the organization's contribution thus far probably amounts to a fraction of a percent of PPL's demand, according to PPL.

"Conceptually, it was a brilliant idea. It was ahead of its time," Alan Jennings, one of SEF's founding board members, said of the organization. But Jennings -- who heads another nonprofit, the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley -- eventually grew disillusioned.

"It was slow to take off. I'm not aware of any significant outcomes since I left the board," he said. "The fact that I don't know anything about what they're doing suggests they aren't doing much or they're doing a lousy job of promoting it."

Another founding board member, Eric Epstein, who is still with SEF, said it's a matter of promotion. "I think that's a fair criticism," he said. "We're trying to rectify that."

Epstein was optimistic about SEF's future. "We've learned from our mistakes, like any start-up company." That, he said, means the organization is well positioned to make the most of a new generation of opportunities.

"The technology that is out there now is different not only because it has improved, but because it is affordable," he said.

SEF, located in an office park suite near Lehigh Valley International Airport, came under new management a year ago. Jennifer Hopkins, an accountant with an extensive background in both the private sector and nonprofits, is the new director.

Under Hopkins' leadership, SEF has laid the groundwork to award \$7 million in financing over the next year, according to SEF project manager DeBias. That would be roughly half of the total during the organization's first seven years.

DeBias, one of SEF's four staff members, said the ramp-up in activity is possible because of a new, more targeted approach to evaluating and selecting projects.

"Now that we have these systems in place, we can get this money out," she said.

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SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUND OF CENTRAL EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA What: A non-profit organization that funds energy-saving environmental projects. Most financing is in the form of low-interest loans, though some grants have been awarded, as well.

History: Created through a negotiated settlement between PPL Corp. and the Public Utility Commission, when Pennsylvania deregulated the power industry in 1998. It is one of four such organizations statewide -- one for each of the state's major electric utilities.

Location: Hanover Township, Lehigh County.

Staff: Four employees, including the director, plus one full-time contractor.

Assets: \$22 million.

Web site: www.thesef.org.

Source: Sustainable Energy Fund

FROM WIND MILLS

TO SOLAR

The Sustainable Energy Fund has supported a variety of environmental initiatives. Some examples:

WIND MILLS

A \$1.75 million loan helped cover the \$31 million cost of the Bear Creek Wind Farm near Wilkes-Barre. The massive wind mills, towering above the crest of a hill, can supply enough energy to power 5,500 homes.

LED TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Pottsville switched to light emitting diode, or LED, traffic lights with the energy fund's help. The LED lights reduce electricity consumption by up to 90 percent, saving the city \$16,000 a year.

**ECO-FRIENDLY CONSTRUCTION** 

A \$500,000 million loan provided the seed money to build the Londonderry School, a certified "green" building designed to minimize energy consumption. The elementary school, located near Harrisburg, also features renewable materials, such as bamboo flooring.

MICRO-LOANS

The energy fund lent \$8,500 to a physical therapy office for the installation of a solar-heated water system.

# Source: Sustainable Energy Fund

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

Sam Kennedy Of The Morning Call, 'Green money \*\* Fund supports projects that promote energy efficiency. It has \$22 million in assets.', *Morning Call, The* (online), 17 Jun 2007 D1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/119DD092161DF8D8>



## Winds of change

April 30, 2007 | Metro - Philadelphia (PA) Author: brian x. mccrone / metro philadelphia | Section: Local | 328 Words OpenURL Link

PENNSYLVANIA - The slow-spinning, 400-foot turbines visible from the Northeast Extension of the Turnpike don't exactly fit into the idyllic Poconos landscape near Exit 105.

But the six supersized machines of the Bear Creek Wind Farm are part of a growing clean energy push in the gusty mountain region of Northeast Pennsylvania. There are 54 turbines on three farms, including 43 at the Waymart Wind Farm.

"Each wind turbine produces enough electricity each year for 250 to 400 typical American homes," said Paul Copleman of Iberdrola Renewable Energies, which is partnered with Peco Wind Energy. "It's still a small percentage of how America generates electricity ... but we have over 36,000 Peco customers now using wind energy, including some large ones like the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University and some municipalities."

The biggest City Hall in America just added itself to that list.

During Earth Week last week, Mayor John Street announced the purchase of 8,500 megawatts of Peco Wind energy - enough to power City Hall for a year.

Wind energy, however, comes with a cost. Peco spokeswoman Cathy Engle said the city is paying \$20 more per megawatt, or \$170,000, for the year's supply.

Residential homeowners can elect to pay an additional \$7.62 a month for 300 kilowatts of the clean energy.

"It's been about three years and the Peco Wind program is now ranked in the top 10 fastest growing green power programs in the country," Engle said.

But there are only so many places suitable for the turbines. There are four wind farms in southeastern Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh and three farms in the Poconos. With growing demand, expansion of farms in South Jersey could be next.

The energy's cleanliness is worth the extra money, according to one Pennsylvania energy expert.

"Wind energy, both from the perspective of cutting air pollution and tackling global warming, is a critical part of our energy future," PennEnvironment clean air advocate Nathan Willcox said. "All the wind farms are helping to displace coal-fired power plants."

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

brian x. mccrone / metro philadelphia, 'Winds of change', *Metro - Philadelphia* (online), 30 Apr 2007 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/118D73D7F1D03668">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/118D73D7F1D03668</a>



# Another wind farm - this one in northern Schuylkill County - is going up

October 18, 2006 | Standard-Speaker (Hazleton, PA)

Section: News 322 Words

OpenURL Link

Another wind farm - this one in northern Schuylkill County - is going up.

Construction began this summer on the 13-turbine Locust Ridge Wind Farm in Mahanoy Township, said Eric Blank, vice president in charge of development for Community Energy Inc.

Community Energy, based in Wayne, is a subsidiary of IBERDROLA, an international energy developer, Blank said.

He said the Locust Ridge Wind Farm should be operating by the end of the year, its maximum electricity output of 26 megawatts will be enough to power 5,000 to 7,000 average-sized homes.

The towers on which the rotors will be mounted stand 78 meters tall or about 255 feet.

The three-bladed rotors are 87 meters in diameter, Blank said.

On Monday, several cranes worked near the towers that rise on high ground just west of Interstate 81 and northwest of the Mahanoy City exit of Interstate 81.

One rotor assembly was in place, with the other towers sitting in a line across the forested ridge.

Blank said the pre-construction work at the site included "a whole suite of studies" conducted to determine what impact the wind farm might have on migratory birds, bats and endangered species.

"All kinds of stuff" was studied, he said.

He said the power will be sold to PPL EnergyPlus.

Community Energy also built the 24-megawatt Bear Creek wind farm just south of Wilkes-Barre.

That wind farm's turbines and towers can be seen from the city and came on line last December, according to Community Energy's Web site.

Community Energy has also installed a wind farm near the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Somerset County.

It has also installed wind-power operations in Illinois, West Virginia, New York, in Wayne County, New Hampshire and New Jersey and proposes to build a wind farm in Worcester County, Masss.

Another wind-power developer, DGP Power LLC, is seeking to lease land in Northumberland County near Schuylkill County on which to place a wind farm.

On the Net:

www.communityenergy.biz

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'Another wind farm – this one in northern Schuylkill County – is going up', *Standard-Speaker* (online), 18 Oct 2006 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/114D980D10AD93B8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/114D980D10AD93B8</a>



# Several items remain unresolved in Bear Creek wind park plans Developer, township commission disagree over requirements

September 19, 2006 | Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA) Author: BILL ANDROCKITIS JR. CORRESPONDENT| Section: News | 275 Words OpenURL Link

BEAR CREEK TWP. - Little progress was made on the proposed wind farm at the township's planning commission meeting Monday night.

Representatives from the company seeking approval to build the wind park, Energy Unlimited, and planning commission members sparred for nearly two hours over several issues.

The land to be used for the wind farm is part of approximately 7,000 acres owned by Luzerne County. There are currently no public roads built to access the land.

In the company's proposal, access roads would be built to the area for the sole purpose of building and maintaining the wind turbines. The roads would be off limits to public motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Several of the planning commission members argued that because it's public land, access should be allowed to anyone.

If the roads are to be used by the public, they would have to be built to the standards in the township's ordinance.

Representatives from Energy Unlimited argued the proposed access road would first go through an easement on private property.

Anyone other than authorized people would be trespassing.

Complicating the situation, the county-owned land is expected to be sold to the state by the end of this year, according to Bradley Elison, district forester from the state's Bureau of Forestry. Elison said the land is intended to become part of the state forest system.

Township solicitor Bill Vinsko told the commission, in his opinion, that they could not take into account any future owner of the land. They could only make a recommendation based on the application submitted, he added.

A recommendation by the commission on Energy Unlimited's application is expected at its October meeting.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

BILL ANDROCKITIS JR. CORRESPONDENT, 'Several items remain unresolved in Bear Creek wind park plans Developer, township commission disagree over requirements', *Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice*(online), 19 Sep 2006 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/114F2E337B777320">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/114F2E337B777320</a>



## Environmental group files appeal over Bear Creek wind turbine plan

August 16, 2006 | Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA) Author: TOM VENESKY STAFF WRITER| Section: News| 491 Words OpenURL Link

A decision to allow a variance to construct nine turbines in Bear Creek Township has been appealed to Luzerne County court.

Defend Our Watershed, a local environmental watchdog group, along with township residents Matthew Hrabousky and William D. and Jeanie Haas, filed the appeal on Tuesday asking the court to reverse a decision by the township zoning hearing board to grant a "use variance" allowing the turbines to be constructed on land zoned for conservation.

The appeal also requests the court to nullify two prior use variances granted for the project in 2001 and 2003 because Energy Unlimited Inc., the firm planning the project, failed to commence with construction within one year of the approvals.

In August 2005, Energy Unlimited requested the variance to construct nine turbines near Crystal Lake on 835 acres of property that Luzerne County acquired from Theta Land Corp. The nine turbines are in addition to 25 turbines previously proposed for the site known as the Penobscot Mountain Wind Farm.

Last week, Luzerne County President Judge Michael Conahan overturned a decision by the township board of supervisors to deny the plan for 25 turbines.

Energy Unlimited originally sought a variance, which was granted, to construct 10 turbines on the property in November 2001. On Oct. 28, 2003, the zoning hearing board modified the decision to allow 26 turbines to be constructed. One of the 26 turbines has since been removed from the project. In August 2005, Energy Unlimited requested a variance for an additional nine turbines, for a total of 34 turbines. Beginning that September, the zoning hearing board conducted 12 hearings on the variance before issuing approval in May 2006.

According to the appeal, wind turbines are not a permitted use on property zoned C-1 (conservation), nor are conditional uses or special exceptions permissible. A variance can be granted if the zoning results in a unnecessary hardship and several conditions are met, including: unique physical characteristics of the property lead to the hardship; the hardship has not been created by the variance applicant; and the variance will not alter the character of the area.

The appeal also alleges the variance should not have been granted because the conditions for hardship were not met and the request should have been considered a new application separate from the two prior variances because construction had not commenced within one year of approval, as required by township ordinance.

Attorney William Higgs, representing Defend Our Watershed, Hrabousky and the Haases, could not be reached for comment.

Defend Our Watershed board member Dr. Henry Smith Jr. said the zoning board was overanxious when it approved the variance.

"Looking at the law and the township ordinances, it's apparent the zoning board was eager to give this approval despite the township ordinances," he said.

Attorney Ernie Preate, representing Energy Unlimited, said eight months of testimony from expert witnesses during the zoning hearing process is evidence that the zoning board was correct in granting the variance.

The variance is now before the township planning commission.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

TOM VENESKY STAFF WRITER, 'Environmental group files appeal over Bear Creek wind turbine plan', *Citizen's Voice, The & Sunday Voice* (online), 16 Aug 2006 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/113902F493301048>



# PPL wants to clean up environment while boosting profit \*\* The company is trumpeting efforts to reduce pollution, increase alternative energy.

March 5, 2006 | Morning Call, The (Allentown, PA)
Author: Sam Kennedy Of The Morning Call | Section: OUTLOOK 2006 | 853 Words
Page: D8
OpenURL Link

Step into PPL Corp.'s recently refurbished 23-story tower in Allentown and you could be in Manhattan. The decor is dominated by polished rock and accented by dark wood and brass.

But there, on a table in the lobby, is a booklet filled with colorful illustrations of fish, birds, a hydroelectric dam and a setting sun behind a row of power-generating windmills. In another image, a field of purple and white wildflowers shimmers before a power plant and smokestacks in the distance.

PPL has made a name for itself as a diversified, international electric company. It is the region's second-biggest publicly traded company and its fifth-biggest employer, with a local payroll of 2,600.

It earned \$678 million in 2005, and has forecast annual growth of 11 percent through 2010.

Yet, the Allentown company has another story that it wants to get out, too -- the one depicted in the illustrated booklet: PPL says it is doing right by the environment.

"We know that we can improve the environment while generating electricity and profits," the booklet reads. "The most environmentally sensitive companies are also among the most profitable."

In the past few years, the company has agreed to allow dams in Maine to be demolished, relinquished mineral rights in north-central Pennsylvania state forest land and launched a \$1.5 billion project to clean up emissions from three coal-fired power plants.

Under an air quality agreement with New Jersey, the company promised to shut down its coal-fired power plant at Martins Creek, north of Easton, next year.

"PPL has made some very big environmental initiatives," said John Hanger, president of the PennFuture environmental group. But, he added, "It would be a big mistake for PPL to think they've done enough."

More is on the way in 2006, PPL President James Miller said in a recent interview. He described progress on various fronts.

## Cleaning schedule

Scrubber construction is moving about a year ahead of schedule at two power plants at the company's Montour facility north of Danville and at the largest of its Brunner Island plants south of Harrisburg. Work is on track to be completed in 2008 at Montour and 2009 at Brunner Island.

"It's tremendously beneficial to the state," Miller said.

In a report by the Environmental Integrity Project last year, Montour ranked No. 8 nationally and Brunner Island No. 22 in terms of acid rain-causing sulfur dioxide emissions. The two spewed a combined 219,000 tons of sulfur dioxide into the air in 2004, according to the report.

Once built, the scrubbers -- massive concrete towers -- will capture the sulfur dioxide through a chemical process

that uses pulverized limestone. The byproduct will then be converted into drywall, for use in houses and other buildings, at a nearby factory also under construction.

In addition to benefiting the environment, the accelerated timetable will help PPL's bottom line, Miller said. Under an emissions-trading system signed into law by the first President Bush in 1990, utilities that reduce emissions can sell allowances to pollute to other utilities.

"It's smart business and the right thing to do," PennFuture's Hanger said of the scrubber project.

Not just hot air

Also this year, a PPL-supported wind farm is expected to go online, Miller said. The facility, to be located in the Wilkes Barre-Scranton area near the Bear Creek exit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, is expected to generate 20 megawatts -- enough power for about 20,000 homes -- making it the third biggest in the state.

"We're very interested in renewable energy," Miller said, also citing the company's experimental work in hydrogen fuel cells and landfill methane gas.

Hanger said that, while PPL is "rightly proud to trumpet" its environmental work, the sunny images in the company's booklet should be viewed in context.

On the scrubbers, he said, "It's a little late, but better late than never."

And he described the Bear Creek wind farm as "a small first step."

Hanger noted that a 2004 state law requires electricity utilities to get 8 percent of their electricity from new alternative sources, such as wind and the sun, by the end of 2019. So far, he said, PPL is at about 1 percent.

PPL also has another major environmental issue on its plate: Continuing cleanup of 100 million gallons of fly ash that spilled into the Delaware River after a catch basin failed last summer. The company faces a lawsuit related to the spill filed by state environmental officials in Commonwealth Court.

PPL is taking steps and moving in the right direction because it must, according to Hanger.

"Smart energy companies understand that they must operate in a way that protects the public health and the environment." he said. "If you're hurting the public health, sooner or later it's going to catch up to the bottom line."

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Sam Kennedy Of The Morning Call, 'PPL wants to clean up environment while boosting profit \*\* The company is trumpeting efforts to reduce pollution, increase alternative energy.', *Morning Call, The* (online), 5 Mar 2006 D8 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11033F5C1C293698">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/11033F5C1C293698</a>



#### A TRIP TO WIND FARM MIGHT CHANGE STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS

January 26, 2006 | Times Leader, The (Wilkes-Barre, PA)

Section: NEWS | 326 Words

Page: 11A OpenURL Link

I applaud the Wyoming Seminary students who wrote to voice their opinion on windmills. The argument for renewable energy sources is critical for our country and the environment. However, I suggest that they organize a class trip to the Bear Creek "wind farm" that they reference.

While the topic of windmills conjures up images of tulips and wooden shoes, they may be horrified (as I was this weekend) to see mammoth hydraulic turbines looming above their water source at a height that's over three times the size of their school.

While there, they could earn extra credit in many classes. In biology, they could observe the disruption of one the area's most unique ecosystems and the irreversible damage to its flora and fauna. For social studies, they could witness a wilderness area supposedly protected by the county for public use converted into an industrial site.

If taking political science, they would benefit from researching the shady deals that made it possible for a few insiders to profit at taxpayers' expense. In economics, they could calculate the actual output of the turbines versus the flow of public funds into private hands.

And lastly, a geography lesson would illustrate how the windmills are being placed just far enough away so the company can still leverage its Bear Creek connections, but no so far that they would be faced with opposition from other communities. It would be a valuable education on how even something as potentially beneficial as wind power can be misused and misapplied for personal gain.

Again, it is wonderful that the students stepped forward and voiced their thoughts on this very important topic. I hope they learn that public debate allows all the facts to be heard and enables individuals to modify their position before they are misled by the preconceived opinions of others. In regard to the windmills being erected around Crystal Lake, it is a shame that voting adults don't have less apathy and more class trips.

#### Steven Gallacher Mountain Top

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

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## WYOMING SEMINARY STUDENT GROUP GIVES WINDMILLS AN 'A'

January 19, 2006 | Times Leader, The (Wilkes-Barre, PA)

Section: NEWS | 200 Words

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We, students of Wyoming Seminary Lower School, would like to submit our ideas about the use of wind turbines in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Having read both articles on wind turbines, we are in favor of building them in Bear Creek. Wind turbines are a natural and renewable resource. They can help the environment along with supplying a reliable energy source for the area. Wind turbines are important for the future generations of our community.

With the need for new energy sources due to the prices of fossil fuel, wind turbines could become a friendly alternative. Even though the main complaint about the turbines is that they are destroying the scenery, their modern design adds an appealing affect to the landscape.

Their location will be in an area where they will be too far away from houses and other dwellings to have any interference with people. They leave plenty of room for animal habitats. Building wind turbines will show people in other areas that we care about the environment and that we are willing to pay the price to help the future of our community.

Garrett Konecke Emily Smallwood Madeleine Hackett Molly McFadden George Cimochowski Andy Hughes Beau Reznak Nick Lieback

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## BEAR CREEK WIND FARM TALE ILLUSTRATES AREA'S ETHICAL LAPSES

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First of all, let me state that I am all for renewable energy resources as a way to preserve the environment while at the same time provide for the community's well-being. While living in Utah, I supported the Glen Canyon Dam. While living in Seattle, I was in favor of commercial geothermal generators. Both of these initiatives had an impact on their surrounding environment, but they were carefully planned out with scrutiny and input from the public.

What I am not in favor of is the cronyism and back-room deal-making that's rampant in this area. Since moving to the Wyoming Valley three years ago, I am constantly amazed at the low level of ethics that elected officials assume the voting public will endure. I am also amazed at how little the media works to expose and abolish these practices. The "wind farm" that is being railroaded into Bear Creek Township and the Crystal Lake watershed is a prime and very visible example of how a select group is spinning public sentiment to generate profits, not energy. Forgetting the obvious environmental disregard, this is how this taxpayer sees the deception being perpetrated.

First, the utilities sell the property in question to Theta, a private holding company, and not to the government that has regulated them. The private company then turns around and sells the land to the county for a 233 percent profit (at taxpayer expense). This premium is supposedly paid (by us) to preserve one of the county's remaining natural areas. Surprisingly, or conveniently, the county neglects to do normal due diligence and doesn't realize that the private company has retained and subsequently leased the wind rights plus the land rights required to harvest them.

Afterwards, the private interests wait for Harrisburg to enact the energy tax credit (again, at taxpayer expense) before deciding that wind energy is a good idea for them. Additionally, the subsidy also allows them to force sell the minimal kilowatts generated by the turbines at an inflated rate (which they retain) and not necessarily to the benefit of the local community.

Incentives in place, county officials lay low while the private interests push their agenda. Work is begun without required permits or studies, but completed with impunity. Financial inducements, which are minimal in comparison to the overall amount of money changing hands, are offered to Bear Creek Township even though Luzerne County owns the land. At best, by refusing to make any decisions, the commissioners are trying to distance themselves from the controversy. At worst, by abdicating responsibility to a local township that stands to reap a substantial financial reward, they are attempting to conceal their complicity. All the while, the "green" message is broadcast unsubstantiated to whitewash the real reasons the windmills are being pursued.

This smacks of the region's notorious coal-baron mentality. They too felt that they had free reign to siphon off public funds for personal gain, and at the long-term expense of the environment. It seems that this practice, along with a total disregard for the public's intelligence, is alive and well in Luzerne County today. However, these are different times.

The revenge taken in the recent election as a result of politicians awarding themselves pay raises is evidence that taxpayer memories are increasing along with the level of accountability they will hold elected officials to -- especially when they appear to be using their positions to line pockets. At the next elections, 250-foot-high steel structures containing thousands of gallons of oil and hydraulic fluid perched over our watershed may be a lasting reminder to every taxpayer that this was about currying favor and generating profits -- not electricity.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

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# URBAN RETHINKING WIND DEAL/ COMMISSIONER SAYS THERE ARE NO EASEMENTS ON RECORD FOR THE TAXPAYER-PURCHASED LAND

November 18, 2005 | Times Leader, The (Wilkes-Barre, PA) Author: JENNIFER LEARN-ANDES jandes@leader.net| Section: NEWS| 696 Words Page: 1A OpenURL Link

County Commissioner Stephen A. Urban believes he and the public were deceived about plans for a wind park on taxpayer-purchased land, especially since he has taken a second look at paperwork associated with the purchase.

Luzerne County taxpayers paid millions of dollars to buy conservation land around Crystal Lake, some of which will contain windmills that will generate electricity and profit for private entities.

Approved by Urban and two former commissioners in December 2003, the sales contract said the property was being sold subject to all "covenants, easements, restrictions and reservations of record."

Urban and county Recorder of Deeds Mary Dysleski honed in on the "of record" stipulation, and searched the office's entire computerized database. They failed to uncover any public record for a wind park easement on the property purchased from Theta Land Corp., and both are confident that there are none.

Easements are traditionally recorded so anyone searching for information about a particular parcel knows what conditions are attached to it, Dysleski said.

"Obviously Theta tried to hide it. It's not recorded in the courthouse. They talk about easements of record. If you're doing a title search, how do you determine what easements exist and value them if they're not on record?" Urban asked.

The sales agreement contains no mention of windmills. Urban knew Theta had leased out timber rights on the property but said he was never informed that the company had leased off wind rights as well. The timber rights are recorded in Dysleski's office.

Urban re-examined a press release from December 2003 in which the county and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources jointly announced the land purchase, and there was no mention of windmills.

The release said public ownership will continue "needed protection" of the water supply and habitat for many species while "allowing for timber management and public outdoor recreation." The release said the land around Crystal Lake - known as the Arbutus Peak Oak Barrens - provides "critical habitat and supporting landscapes for plant and animal species of special concern."

The release cites studies that designate the acreage as top priority for preservation and as one of the "richest barrens for butterflies and moths in the Northeast," including five species that are "globally rare."

"It didn't say they'd put windmills on half the land," Urban said. "There's a lot of deception going on here."

On June 8, 2004, Theta filed an easement in Dysleski's office giving Energy Unlimited Inc. authority to use or work on a 35-foot-wide water pipeline on the property. The document doesn't refer to wind rights but contains a 2003 map entitled "Bear Creek Wind Park" with dots showing the location of 34 wind turbines.

The actual wind rights lease with Theta became public in a June 18 lease assumption document that was part of the sales closing paperwork.

Commissioners Todd Vonderheid and Greg Skrepenak, who took office in January 2004, voted to approve the document. Urban abstained.

Urban said he abstained because the lease was presented at the last moment without explanation in a work session. He believes the county could have gotten out of the lease if this document hadn't been approved.

Vonderheid said he and Skrepenak had to sign the June 18 document to avoid costly litigation that would have arisen from breaking the sales agreement signed by Urban and former commissioners Tom Makowski and Tom Pizano.

The wind lease says Energy Unlimited has "sole discretion" to determine the quantity and location of the wind turbines and related equipment on the property around Crystal Lake. The lease runs 30 years, with the option for a 20-year renewal.

Energy Unlimited pays Theta 3 percent of the gross revenues produced by the sale of electricity, but not less than \$35,000 per year.

Urban said he fully supports wind farms on private lands, but believes public land should be used only in cases where there is full public disclosure.

"The county still paid top dollar. If Theta wanted to put a wind farm there, then it should've annexed out the portion it intended to put a windmill on and sold off the rest of the property," Urban said. "Our intent of buying it was to preserve it."

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