

CASE STUDY:

Pipestone-Jasper School District: Wind Energy and Education



In Fall 2001, the Pipestone-Jasper School District was awarded one of Xcel Energy's Renewable Development Fund grants to construct a wind turbine. Jack Keers, a Pipestone County Commissioner, and Dan Juhl, a local wind developer, had urged the Pipestone-Jasper School District to apply for a grant to install a wind turbine at the new school to supply part of the school's electricity needs. The District was ideally positioned and seemed like a perfect fit for a school wind turbine project. The school would be located on a very windy Buffalo Ridge location, funding for the new school was secure, and construction was significantly under budget. With the Renewable Development Fund grant in place, the District must contribute \$150,000 toward turbine construction and Xcel Energy contributes the remaining \$850,000.

The new school property is a 55-acre piece of land on the edge of town, and the wind turbine will be located on the northwest portion of the property to take advantage of the prevailing winds. The school will install a 900 kW wind turbine that is expected to power all of the schools basic needs and then some. The District anticipates selling the excess energy back

to Sioux Valley Southwestern Electric, which should allow them to payback their initial investment within 6 years and will also allow the school to raise a bit of money after the payback period.

In addition to the economic incentives, Jerry Horgen, Superintendent of Pipestone-Jasper School District, also sees "great benefit in having the school set an example for the community by using renewable energy". As an educational institution, the District has a major role in educating and bringing the community together. The wind turbine project provides an ideal educational project for students of all ages, and will be incorporated into learning activities within the science department. Dr. Horgen says that the wind turbines offer a great opportunity for "furthering environmental awareness in our kids." As of summer 2002, the project is moving along right on target. The new building is expected to open by January 2003 and wind tower construction is anticipated to begin during April 2003 and should be completed by July or August 2003.

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