

*CASE STUDY:****Wind Power in Worthington***

By Margaret Broeren, The Minnesota Project



In September 2000, the Worthington Public Utilities assembled a task force of citizens to investigate the merit of wind power in Worthington. Windustry, a project affiliated with the non-profit Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, funded the feasibility study through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Investigation results were very positive, so Worthington Public Utilities entered into a three-way partnership with Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), a joint action power agency based in Sioux Falls, and Wisconsin Public Power Inc (another power agency), to install four new 900 kW wind turbines. Worthington Public Utilities owns the distribution, while the two partners each owned two of the turbines, allowing both to qualify for the Minnesota Renewable Energy Production Incentives for projects less than 2 MW.

In July 2002, the four wind turbines went into service. During the first year, energy production was 5.5% higher than original estimates. In September 2003, plans to build two additional turbines at the site were announced. The new 950 kW turbines, owned by MRES, were completed in December 200e, bringing on-site capacity to 3.7 MW.

Energy generated by the wind turbines is fed into the power grid for the local

community and the member cities of MRES and Wisconsin Public Power, Inc.

Worthington's electric customers can purchase this renewable energy in 100 kWh blocks for an extra \$2.00/month (or 2 cents/kWh) through the MRES RiverWinds program.

Worthington has found strong support throughout the community for the project. The original task force was composed of a cross-section of interests, including the utilities sector, educators, land owners, and government staff. Scott Hain, Utility Coordinator for Worthington Public Utilities, says one of the biggest successes of the project is from a public relations standpoint. The towers, located only two and a half miles west of town, have been toured by school groups ranging from elementary to college age. Worthington Public Utilities hopes to sustain this public interest by continuing to engage the surrounding community. Open houses not only educate citizens about how wind power works, but encourage them to stay interested and involved in wind turbine development. Worthington Public Utilities has secured the option to lease land adjacent to the current site, but no



Construction of the Worthington wind turbine

CERT's Partners: Minnesota Department of Commerce, The Minnesota Project, University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, The Rural Minnesota Energy Board, Metropolitan counties Energy Task Force, Resource Conservation and Development Council.

imminent plans are underway for further construction.

For more information contact:
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<http://www.worthingtonpublicutilities.com>

You may also contact:
RiverWinds (Missouri River Energy Services), 605-338-4042
<http://www.riverwinds.biz>