



SW CERT  
 Wind Development, Roads, Bridges, and Land Use  
 February 11<sup>th</sup> 2008  
 Windom, MN DNR Headquarters

**Meeting notes**

**Attendance** – between 50 and 60 people attended; not everyone signed in.

<i>Mandy Landkamer, Blue Earth Co</i>	<i>George Leary, Blue Earth</i>	<i>Laine Sletta, Brown Co</i>
<i>Steve Kubista, Chippewa Co</i>	<i>Scott Williams, Chippewa Co</i>	<i>Tom White, Cottonwood Co</i>
<i>Ron Gregg, Cottonwood County</i>	<i>Ron Kuecker, Cottonwood Co</i>	<i>Jerry Hayes, Cottonwood Co</i>
<i>John Oeltjenbruns, Cottonwood Co</i>	<i>Mike Hanson, Cottonwood Co</i>	<i>Chad Viland, Faribault Co</i>
<i>John McDonald, Faribault Co</i>	<i>John Grindeland, Fillmore County</i>	<i>Tim Stahl, Jackson County</i>
<i>Gordy Olson, Jackson County</i>	<i>Larry Hanson, Lincoln County</i>	<i>Robert Olson, Lincoln County</i>
<i>Lee Amundson, Lincoln County</i>	<i>Anita Benson, Lyon County</i>	<i>John Biren, Lyon County</i>
<i>John Boe, Meeker County</i>	<i>Mike Hanson, Mower County</i>	<i>Randy Groves, Murray County</i>
<i>Jean M. Christoffels, Murray Co</i>	<i>Robert Redding, Nicollet Co</i>	<i>Mike Wagner, Nicollet County</i>
<i>Stephen Schneider, Nobles County</i>	<i>David Halbersma, Pipestone Co</i>	<i>Kyle Krier, Pipestone County</i>
<i>Ernie Fiala, Redwood County</i>	<i>Eric Hartman, Rock County</i>	<i>Bruce Johnson, Watonwan Co</i>
<i>Roger Risser, Watonwan County</i>	<i>Andy Sander, Swift/YM Co</i>	<i>Jim Kartes, City of Windom</i>
Tom Kresko, DNR	Randy Markel, DNR	Mike Salmon, DNR
Ray Kirsch, MN DOC	Larry Hartman, MN DOC	Adam Sokolski, MN DOC
Will Matzek, Olsson Associates	Nate Stanley, Olsson Associates	Corey Juhl, Developer
Tyler Juhl, Developer	Cheryl Glaeser, SW I F	Jarrett Hubbard, MnDOT District 8
Marty Espensen, Community Wind Development Group		Annette Bair, SRDC, SW CERT

**Introduction and Overview:** Netty Bair provided an overview of why the SRDC and SW CERT assisted in arranging for the meeting / workshop and a broad overview of wind development, advantages and disadvantages, and the future. Many slides borrowed from other presentations, including: Windustry, NREL, & MnProject (pdf file size of slides is just under 4 MB – email Netty for an electronic copy).

- 9 County Regional Development Commission reviews and comments on projects in the region – this includes state permitted wind projects, ethanol projects, transmission line siting, as well as other infrastructure projects; and on proposed rules and regulations that affect the area.
- When the State asked for comment on the wind development standards, we requested input from County Engineers and Zoning Administrators. The comments were collectively submitted to the state.
- SW CERT is 12 counties, and part of my job is to assist in facilitating information regarding renewable energy. The objective of today's meeting is to: Increasing the awareness of how the state works with the permitting and who to contact with questions or issues, to provide a forum for you to discuss with your peers what are the impacts of development and what works well in your counties, and if there is any follow up needed – either by me or others that will help smooth development issues (for the local jurisdictions, the state and the developers).



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**State permitting:** Adam Sokolski, State Department of Commerce, presented information about where wind is developing in MN, and future projections of wind development; state permitting requirements and public input process. A pdf copy slides is 254 KB in size, email an electronic copy).

- Where are they? 1,299 MW as of Jan 2008 AWEA
- Size = ½ to 200 MW
- Will new digital reception diminish signal strength? Unknown - Adam will look into.
- DOC will determine "size" if the project is less than 25 MW for a delegated county.

**Local Panel.**

John Biren and Anita Benson - Lyon County described recent experience of wind development that occurred in Lyon County, the things they liked and thought could have been better. Lyon Co Wind Ordinance <http://www.lyonco.org/depts/publicworks/pz/windordinancechanges.pdf>, Developer and co must agree on a route, METC, wooden signs, road closed signed ¼ mile in from intersection. Things that could be done better: transmission lines only on one side of road instead of both sides, communication. Lyon County is considering delegation.

Mike Hanson, Mower County described his has experience, which first began with a gasified peaking plant; and then three wind developments. The first wind development was a small development and there was no problem with it. There were some problems with the second larger development (road ruts from crane, road x-ings at night w/o notification, damage to bitum & gravel roads). By the third development a process had been developed which increased communication and the process was much smoother, and reimbursement has been received for damaged roads / infrastructure. Meetings with the developer/contractor and county, every driveway was permitted (not to exceed 32'), stayed off blacktop roads. Prior preparation is very important. Dust control – water, chloride. State permit staff invited the ZA to the preconstruction meeting - really a good thing. Also, county has 400' radio tower – CUP process established and county microwave path with a 1000' corridor.

Lee Amundson and Dave Halbersma (Lincoln and Pipestone Counties respectively) added information about their experiences with development. Developers normally want a permit ASAP, Lee processes 300-400 in 3-4 moths @ \$50 each, and there is normally a stack of faxes each morning. One project may have 8 different company needing permits. Wetland issues and temporary radius of intersection and temporary crossing permit. Cranes crossing fields – crossing wetlands can affect the federal payment to landowners. In Lincoln co the developers salvage the gravel for their own roads. Procedure for closing roads is to contact the sheriff's office and co highway. O&M – heavy loads for repair of the turbines. Prefer the Transmission lines on the S & E sides of the road – less problems with snow.



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**Questions / comments:**

- Communication is key:
  - State to county & county to State. When notice of a state permitted project goes to counties – the official notice is to the county auditor, now will also include notice to the County Highway Engineer and Zoning Administrator (and others?). If a developer is not following the regulations of the state – county should contact the state permitting staff. Invite county staff to the preconstruction meeting.
  - Within county offices: Zoning Administrators and Highway Engineers (as well as other County offices that are affected by wind development ( sheriff/E-911) need to communicate more on what development is occurring within their own county.
  - County to county: A project may be in County A – but haul roads (cement, gravel) comes from County B, a neighboring county. Perhaps permit fees should be based on weight.
  - With developers and all permitting folks. Preconstruction meetings.
- Permits / signage / regulations:
  - Permits (access, weight, etc) vary by county as well as fees
  - Sign regulations are often not followed (i.e. road closed).
  - Permits (driveway, overweight etc takes a lot of staff time), subcontractors with the same project are asking for the same information – why can't it be streamlined – so County staff with the developer.
- Access drives:
  - Use excess gravel back on the roads used to haul the equipment in on.
  - Sometimes there is difficulty getting the developers to remove the temporary driveways.
  - Use for gravel / fill for access roads: developers use for roads to turbines, county has required it be used to add gravel to the haul roads used in the project.
- Weight restrictions:
  - Enforcement of weight restrictions. Very few local law enforcement officers enforce weight restrictions – state patrol has the authority.
  - Developers don't like to hear "no" (spring Weight restriction). One county reported they allow spring weight moves – but County Maintenance Forman watches them make the move and they must pay for the repairs.
- Cannot use certified checks, use bonds.



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- Uniform permit package?
- If met towers are going up, it is a good chance that wind development may follow.
- Larry Hartman asked that the County Zoning Administrators help with location of the turbines (past) and future – so it can be placed in the state database. He had a handout – electronic copy????

**Next Steps:** Begin with increase in communication and processes:

- State permitted project – invite county staff to preconstruction meeting.
- County – internal communication between offices (i.e. if land use office receives permit application regarding wind development (or met towers) let county highway engineer know – potential routes to proposed sites as well as road/bridge construction schedules may also have an impact on the route construction traffic takes.)
- County Highway Engineers will be developing a uniform template for standards (signs, weight, drainage, permits, route plans, etc). This should also help DOC staff and developers. SRDC / SW CERT staff offered to assist the Co Engineers as needed.