

PSC clips Just Wind's wings over setbacks

Just Wind has secured permits for most but not all the turbines planned for its 368MW Logan County farm in North Dakota.

The state Public Service Commission flagged six of the 156 Mitsubishi 2.4MW turbines last week because the setbacks were several hundred feet shy of the agency's 1400-foot preference.

PSC officials had asked Just Wind to get consent forms from landowners within the closer setback ranges, and the developer has now submitted those. The regulator will study potential noise levels and other factors before deciding whether to grant an exception.

Another PSC concern was the wind farm's potential impact on endangered whooping cranes, which are believed to migrate nearby.

Just Wind is participating with nine other developers and wildlife agencies to produce a habitat conservation plan for minimizing impacts on the birds.

The company hopes to start construction this year and have 100MW online by the end of 2009, with the rest commissioned sometime in 2011.

It is in late-stage negotiations on two separate power purchase agreements that would cover all the capacity.

- LS Power has bought the rights to the Wyoming-Colorado Intertie transmission project from AES. The 180-mile line, expected to begin operating in 2013, would deliver 850MW of wind power from Wheatland, Wyoming, to Colorado's Front Range region.

175MW Buckeye farm first to put Ohio permitting through its paces

EverPower has submitted plans for its 175MW Buckeye wind farm in Ohio, making it the first developer to test the state's regulatory process for utility-scale projects.

Preparing the application went smoothly despite the novelty, thanks to strong landowner support and close cooperation with Ohio officials, said EverPower development director Michael Speerschneider.

"If there was any challenge it was the fact that we're the first in Ohio and there is nothing to look at and say how it's

happened in Ohio before," he said.

State Power Siting Board staff members will first review the application for completeness, then a public hearing date will be set and the staff will proceed with research for a formal report on the plans.

The public hearing will be followed by an adjudicatory hearing, then comes the board's decision, which can be appealed first through a request for a rehearing and then to the state Supreme Court.

State officials said they expect the process will take from two to nine months.

EverPower hopes to start construction next year and wrap up in 2011 with output being sold into the PJM Interconnection wholesale market.

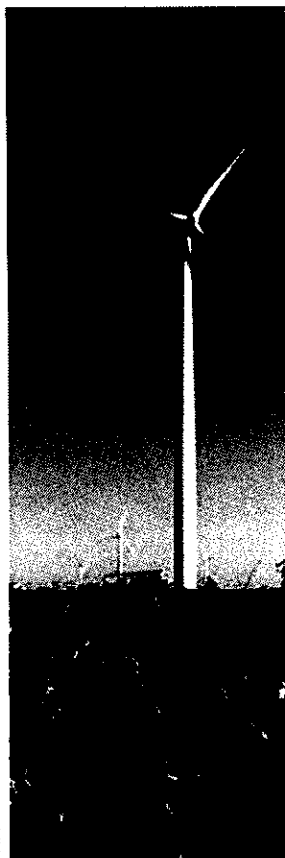
The farm, in Champaign County, would use 70 wind turbines up to 2.5MW each. The hardware has yet to be selected but EverPower designed the project with Repower MM92s or Nordex N100s or N90s in mind.

"Any turbine ultimately selected will be similar in design, appearance and operating characteristics to these," the application states. Testing has

indicated the farm will be able to operate at an average annual capacity factor better than 30%.

The developer began negotiating for land rights three years ago. It expects to pay between \$1.5 million and \$2 million annually in leases based on a percentage of gross revenues.

EverPower is planning a second phase of the project that would allow it to fill out its PJM interconnection agreement for 200MW. It has some extra land already leased but would need to add more.



Whistling in the wind: Smoky Hills was tripped by a transformer blowout but this phase-two turbine kept working

Photo: TradeWind Energy

Smoky Hills turbines to light up after outage

Fifty-six turbines at Enel North America's 250MW Smoky Hills wind farm in central Kansas are expected back online this week after being idled more than four months by a blown transformer.

Enel has yet to make a final determination of the outage's cause. It has, however, concluded that the transformer suffered an internal failure, said Jason Martinson, the Smoky Hills site supervisor.

The failed main body is in transit to the transformer's manufacturer for a comprehensive investigation.

Martinson would not identify the maker, citing "ongoing issues" with pending administrative and warranty claims.

The company has cooperated with Enel officials to resolve the problem and delivered a replacement main body that was installed last

week by the wind farm's developer.

Enel then proceeded to start repowering the 56 Vestas 1.8MW turbines and expects full capacity to be reached this week.

The Vestas turbines constitute Smoky Hills' phase one, which became operational in February of last year.

The 99 GE 1.5 MW turbines constituting phase two, online since December, were not affected by the blowout.

The farm, built by Enel affiliate TradeWind Energy, is located on the border between Ellsworth and Lincoln counties.

A spokeswoman for one of Smoky Hills' power buyers, Sunflower Electric, said the breakdown, which occurred on 12 December, was not especially disruptive since the utility relies on wind primarily to replace generation from natural gas, and gas prices have been falling.

MidAmerican goes for wider horizons at Midwest ISO

MidAmerican Energy will become a transmission-owning member of the Midwest ISO in September.

The company is surrendering functional control of its network in exchange for access to the MISO power trading market and its ancillary services market for smoothing out unexpected loss of generation.

MidAmerican will also be included in MISO's regional planning efforts, and will add 700 MW of generating capacity.

Company president Bill Fehrman said: "Joining the Midwest ISO makes good business sense for our customers as it provides access to the ancillary services market to support our leadership position in wind generation, and helps ensure the company has wider opportunity to buy and sell electric power."