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WHEATLAND COUNTY DESIGNATED AS PROPOSED SITE FOR 180 MEGAWATT WIND FARM

A section of State land lies at the heart of the project

A site has been identified in Wheatland county, between Judith Gap and Harlowton, for the construction of a 180 megawatt (MW) wind farm. This site has been chosen by WindPark Solutions America (WPSA), a Montana company headquartered in Big Sandy.

WPSA, formed by Georg von Wedel, Jörg Beland and Bob Quinn, was established in 2001. Quinn, an organic farmer from Big Sandy, first met his distant cousin, financial analyst von Wedel, in Germany during the summer of 2000. Von Wedel, owner-operator of a 12 MW wind farm, and partner Beland were looking for new opportunities for wind development outside Germany. "I told them, if they were looking for wind, their best bet was Montana. I remember one time the wind stopped blowing, and half the buildings fell down," joked Quinn. After their own investigation of the potential for wind farms in Montana, the two Germans arrived to verify the possibilities.

"This is a great opportunity for Montana to benefit from more than 20 years of wind energy development in Germany," Quinn said. While wind power research and development in the U.S. has lagged, Germany's development has grown to over 12,000 MW, which supplies over 5% of their nation's energy needs. With the experience that von Wedel and Beland bring to WPSA, we can move with calculated precision in bringing commercial size wind development to Montana," Quinn said.

After a whirlwind tour of Montana, meeting with long-time Montana wind-energy supporters and determining state and federal rules and regulations for such a project, WPSA selected three sites for intensive analysis.

In April of 2001 three wind monitoring masts were erected, two in Wheatland County and one in Chouteau County. These were 120 feet high and measured wind speed and direction as well as temperature and air pressure.

After analysis of the first 18 months of data, WPSA decided to focus on a site between Judith Gap and Harlowton. "We have executed an avian study of this site which indicates very little risk to migratory birds. The required studies for the interconnection to the grid now have been finished. We have completed lease agreements with the local landowners and are in the final stages of a lease with the state for a section of school trust land that lies at the heart of our project," said Beland, an engineer with over 12 years experience in developing wind energy in Germany and throughout Europe.

WPSA submitted a request to NorthWestern Energy for interconnection on the high voltage line passing near both wind sites chosen in Wheatland County. The early date of this request has put the project in the first position to interconnect to the grid in that region. NorthWestern Energy determined that the upper limit of the project was 180 MW, enough to supply approximately 50,000 households with economical and environmentally friendly energy. An early public meeting was held in Judith Gap to explain the project at that time and was met with a great deal of community support. WPSA met with Secretary of State, Bob Brown, and introduced the idea of increasing revenues from state land by building wind farms on them.

There is also strong support by the Wheatland County Commissioners who are very glad to see this type of project, which would not only add over \$180,000,000 to the taxable value of the county, but bring in a substantial work force to build it and a permanent maintenance crew.

"We are ready to start now," said Quinn. "And the entire WPSA wind project could be completed within 3 to 5 years." WPSA is about to submit a response to a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the purchase of wind-generated electricity by NorthWestern Energy. "If we are a successful bidder, construction of a major portion of our project will begin this year."

"What WPSA is trying to do is to combine a local Montana company with the best technology that the world's leading country in wind power has to offer in order to build a wind farm that is financially successful, technically superior and environmentally sound. It is the goal of WPSA to have the first commercial wind farm in Montana which can set the standard for the many which hopefully will be built in the future."