

## **Blowing in jobs**

By Laura Tester - Red Deer Advocate – August 15, 2008

A wind power project worth more than \$300 million will pump a wealth of new jobs and tax dollars into East-Central Alberta's economy, says a company CEO.

Dan Balaban of Calgary's Greengate Power Corp. said County of Paintearth can expect huge dividends once construction begins in 2009 and operation follows in 2010.

Numerous jobs will be created for the construction project itself, and maintenance staff will be needed afterwards, Balaban said.

And the income generated by the wind turbines will be passed down to participating landowners through a monthly or annual royalty.

"It has the potential to stimulate the local economy," Balaban said on Thursday. "And from an overall county perspective, it's quite a significant contributor to the tax base. So I think it will ultimately have the effect of keeping taxes at a reasonable level in the county."

The company has well over 20,000 acres under lease to support the 300-megawatt wind power project, about 40 km east of Stettler. Up to 100 turbines, which are 80 metres tall, are expected to be installed on the land.

"The landowners that are getting turbines have signed up for the project," Balaban said. "I think the people in County of Paintearth are excited about being a part of a project that has a positive impact on our environment."

Greengate installed wind monitoring towers for testing purposes. The results look good, so Greengate is pressing forward with its plans, Balaban said.

Balaban said the turbines have generators that will convert the rotational energy into electricity.

That electricity is collected into a substation, which ties into transmission lines that transfer power across Alberta.

The province recently approved the connection into the power lines.

"That's a major hurdle that we've been able to overcome," Balaban said. "There aren't that many places in the province where there are spare capacity in the lines to connect the project."

Earlier this week, county council held a public hearing on the introduction of wind energy regulations into the county's land-use bylaw.

Council then gave second and third reading to amend the land-use bylaw. Under the rules, applicants must provide a list of all consenting landowners and their legal land descriptions.

"That gives us the heads-up as to where the locations are," said county administrator Julie Falkenberg. "They just can't come in and say they've secured the land."

Balaban said the new rules will guide Greengate design plans and what information is needed for county permit applications.

Greengate will submit its development permits to the county within two weeks, he said.

The company has almost completed environmental impact assessments for the provincial government, Balaban added.

Part of those assessments include identifying wildlife habitat, rare plants and potential archeological sites.

Balaban said a second phase is possible, with another 100 turbines on additional land.

Greengate is working on three similar projects elsewhere in Alberta.

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