

Wind turbine electricity coming to Greenbrier

By Christian Giggerbach
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RUPERT — A leading energy company announced Tuesday it will bring a "\$200 million state-of-the-art wind energy project" to Greenbrier County. The project will create 200 megawatts of electricity from large wind turbines.

David Groberg, business development manager for Invenergy, made the announcement at Western Greenbrier Junior High School in front of local economic development leaders, politicians and citizens.

The Beech Ridge Wind Farm expects to initially create approximately 200 jobs during the construction phase of between 50 to 133 wind turbine generators and 20 full-time jobs after completion. The average salary for the full-time jobs is estimated at \$35,000 per year.

The turbines are expected to reach at least 495 feet high and have blade lengths up to 165 feet across. One tower will weigh 130,000 pounds. As the wind turns the turbines, electricity is created by a generator. The turbines make a light swooshing sound which is said to be quieter than normal levels of sound found in a home.

The turbines will be constructed on mountain ridges owned primarily by Mead Westvaco. The 15-mile stretch of ridge lines in the northwestern section of the county include Beech Ridge, Big Ridge, Ellis Knob, Old Field, Nunly Mountain, Rockcamp Ridge, Shellcamp Ridge and parts of Cold Knob. It is expected less than 500 acres will ultimately be used.

"We have purposely situated the project in a rather remote location, and it has been planned in such a manner that it will have a minimal impact on county residents," Groberg said.

Groberg said the 20-year project would pay an average of \$400,000 annually in taxes to Greenbrier County and \$200,000 to the state.

"And, I'm also proud to announce that the development and construction of this project would be made entirely with private capital," he said.



Groberg said these mountain ridges provide sustained winds of up to 15 miles per hour, according to preliminary studies. The proximity to an electrical trans-

AT A GLANCE

Project Summary for Beech Ridge Wind Farm

- Electricity produced — 200 Megawatts.
- Number of turbines — 50-133 Wind turbine generators.
- Location — 15 miles of ridges near the Cold Knob area.
- Jobs — 200 during construction phase, 20 full-time jobs averaging \$35,000 per year.
- Construction is expected to begin in summer of 2006 and be completed by winter of 2006.

Turbine Facts

- Capacity — 1,500-2,300 kw.
- Tower height — 215 feet - 330 feet.
- Blade length — 115 feet - 165 feet.
- Total height — 330 feet - 495 feet.
- Roter Speed — 17 rpm's.
- Weight — 130,000 pounds.

mission system grid and a willing land owner completed the deal.

Groberg expects the project to create enough electricity to power 50,000 homes. The electricity will be sold to major utilities across the United States.

Invenergy expects to submit an application to the West Virginia Public Service Commission this fall. If approved, construction could begin as soon as next summer and be completed by winter of 2006.

Greenbrier County Commissioner David Tuckwiller praised the project and the jobs it will bring to the county.

"The location of the project on Mead Westvaco land complements this type of renewable energy resource that already exists there in timber," he said.

Dick Nevi, executive director of the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corp., said the GVEDC and Mead Westvaco helped land the project in Greenbrier County.

Invenergy is a Chicago based developer and owner of large-scale electricity generator plants in North America. The company was formed in 2001 and has more than 25 projects in active development and construction in the U.S.

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