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Wind Farms coming to Odin by 2007 year-end

by Kristen Pritchard in St. James News

Five Wind Turbines are on their way to Odin Township this fall, after conditional use permits were approved by Watonwan County December 27 at a board meeting. These Wind Turbines are part of five separate LLCs that will each build and generate energy on a 2 megawatt wind turbine in Odin Township. The land the wind farms will be located on is corn and soybean cropland owned by Noel P. Rahn, Partner in Charge of Rahn Group Investment Firm. The land will continue to be used for farming these crops as well as wind energy.

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The LLCs are part of a small, community owned project fitting into the Community Based Energy Development local ownership structure. Rahn Group Analyst Charlie Daum and Rahn said nine owners are involved total in all five wind farms. They said four to five of the owners are from Watonwan County.

After a few loose ends are tied up, including securing the last bit of financing, Rahn said the project should be ready to go by the end of the month. Construction on the wind farms is scheduled for completion by the end of this year. Each wind turbine will be 80 meters in height and 88 meters in rotor diameter. Daum said they should be similar in appearance to the nearby Trimont Wind Farm turbines.

Daum said the turbines should produce an average of \$1250 per turbine in tax revenue to Watonwan County. He said the actual amount will vary based on production.

Rahn and Daum said the Wind Farms will also create jobs for people in the local area because contractors, electricians, maintenance workers and others will be necessary to make the Wind Farms successful.

Daum said the land they will use in Odin Township is the best piece of land to do the project. This is partly because the MISO electric grid system isn't congested in the Odin area, whereas Rahn said the grid system is overloaded in Buffalo Ridge northwest of the town of Lake Benton in the Southwestern corner of Minnesota.

Rahn said his group has worked over three years to get wind farms in Odin and said he thought the farms are a major step forward for Watonwan County and any company.

“We feel very politically correct that this is the right way to go,” Rahn said. “It’s renewable. It does not form any (Carbon Dioxide). It’s fresh. We’re going back to the basics.”

He said he considers wind as oil above land and said it’s good that farmers can keep that “oil” and won’t have to send it out of town.

The energy produced by the Odin Wind Farms will be sold to Missouri River Energy. St. James buys its energy from this agency. The other closet cities who purchase energy from Missouri River include Jackson and Worthington, Minn.