



40th Annual Farm and Garden

Wind: An American Economic Success Story

By Bevan Augustine
Wind energy provides long-term protection to farmland and agriculture and boosts the economy in small towns and rural communities.

Wind power creates good jobs and pumps billions of dollars into the country's economy every year, particularly into rural areas where 99 percent of wind farms are located. In addition, wind farms generate jobs for the local communities in which they are located. Wind energy employs currently more than 105,000 Americans across all 50 states, over 30,000 of whom are located in the Midwest.

The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm

The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm, currently under development by EDP Renewables North America (EDPR), is a \$340 million investment in northeastern Douglas County, providing a significant increase in the county's taxable property base. The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm will provide diversified farm income, improved tax revenues, and local jobs in northeastern Douglas County.

Wind Energy Helps Farmers Diversify Their Income

Wind energy is a weather-proof cash crop, paying more than \$245 million to farmers annually. Similar to farming and ranching, wind farms provide another opportunity for landowners to capture value from their properties' natural resources while allowing traditional farming operations to continue. This consistent stream of supplemental revenue can protect against fluctuating commodity prices and help maintain family farms.

"I have two wind turbines

on my land," said Francis Lyssy, a farmer at one of EDPR's operating wind farms. "We always have a lot of wind around here and now we can make some money to set off the price of farming. The wind farm will help me retire."

Landowners in Douglas County will be receiving more than \$1 million per year in direct payments from the Harvest Ridge Wind Farm through wind leases and neighbor agreements.

Wind Turbines Complement Working Farms

One advantage of a wind farm is the small footprint compared to other generation sources. The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm has signed up almost 10,000 acres of land to participate in the wind farm. Ultimately, less than 95 acres of agricultural land will be dedicated to the wind farm. Farmers can continue to farm their land up to the base of the turbine while at the same time, harvesting their properties' home-grown wind energy year-round.

Don Furer, a farmer at one of EDPR's wind farms in Indiana, explained, "Once they're finished with construction, they put the black dirt back in and we farm right around that windmill."

Wind Farms Benefit the Entire Community

Landowners aren't the only ones who see benefits; entire communities benefit from wind farms, which provide a new source of tax revenue for the county. Schools, fire departments, and local road improvements rely on tax dollars, and the influx of tax dollars from wind farms can help reduce the tax burden on the rest of the area residents.

In Benton County, Indi-

ana, property taxes have decreased by 35 percent because of the tax contributions made by the area's wind farms. The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm is estimated to pay more than \$2 million in local property taxes after the first year of its operation, with more than \$50 million in property taxes in the first 30 years of the project's life.

Wind Farms Provide More Funding for Local Schools and Roads

The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm will provide more than \$1 million to the Shiloh, Heritage, and Villa Grove school districts in direct tax payments after the first year of the project's operation. The districts will receive more than \$25 million from

the wind farm through the next 30 years, which will complement their state aid payments, making a meaningful, long-term impact on the education of current and future students. In addition, nearly \$6 million will go to the Newman Township and Murdock Township Road Districts, money that can be used to improve the local roads and bridges while offering a tax relief for area residents.

EDPR is one of the largest owners and operators of wind farms in Illinois. To date, EDPR has paid more than \$54 million in taxes to the communities in which its five operational Illinois wind farms are located.

"I have personally seen

how our wind farms have transformed communities around the state," said Aaron Weippert, Operations Manager over EDPR's five operational Illinois wind farms. "I've seen schools be completely rebuilt and township roads go from gravel to black top because of the taxes paid by a wind farm."

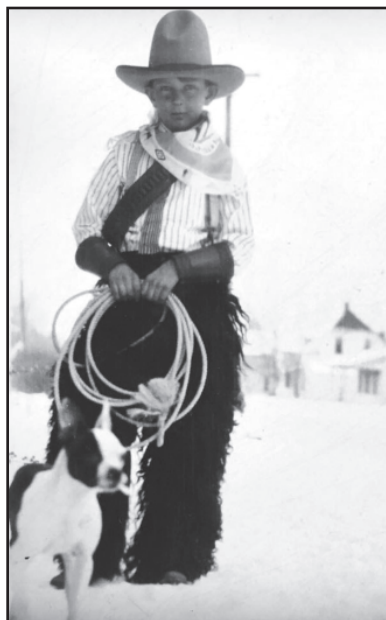
Wind Farms Create Jobs

The Harvest Ridge Wind Farm will support local jobs, creating up to 250 full-time equivalent jobs during construction and between 8 and 10 permanent jobs during the life of the project. Further, the project will boost employment and revenues at nearby businesses by increasing activity among local restaurants, gas stations,

housing rentals, and other similar establishments. "Our guys really look forward to the wages from a project like this, and it's beneficial to us as a company," said Jason Dangler, a local business owner in one of EDPR's other project areas. "We were able to buy new equipment and new service trucks."

Wind energy is a safe, reliable, cost-effective energy resource that offers rural communities important economic development opportunities, making those communities stronger. Everyone wins with wind.

A Look Back: Hog Farm Family Photo



Villa Grove farm photos from the Bob Duncan (died 1913) Family and the Evert Skidmore (b. 1892- d.1974) family who had a hog farm. Photos courtesy of Douglas County Museum



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