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Consumers Energy Secures 28,000 Acres for Wind Energy In Mason and Tuscola Counties

Consumers Energy said this week it had secured more than 28,000 acres of easements in Tuscola and Mason counties for potential wind generation development and is starting the process of testing sites.

Construction started today on four meteorological towers in Mason County, on the Lake Michigan shore in West Michigan, and three towers in Tuscola County, in the Thumb.

Construction of the towers, which are about 180 feet tall, is expected to be completed by the end of the year. In addition to the seven towers being constructed, Consumers Energy also will be refurbishing two existing Mason County towers it has purchased.

"The purpose of the meteorological towers is to collect wind data over a two-year period," said George Hass, executive director of new generation for Consumers Energy. "We'll be measuring wind speed, wind direction and air temperature to determine if the sites are suitable for wind turbine generators and the best location for them."

Construction of the meteorological towers is part of Consumers Energy's Growing Forward strategy, which calls for investing more than \$6 billion in Michigan, including investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, environmental and customer service enhancements, and new power generation.

Comprehensive energy reform legislation signed into law Oct. 6 by Gov. Jennifer Granholm includes a renewable portfolio standard. That standard requires Consumers Energy and other utilities to provide 10 percent of their electric supplies from renewable energy by 2015. Approximately five percent of Consumers Energy's electric supply is from renewable energy sources.

Consumers Energy, the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy, provides natural gas and electricity to nearly 6.5 million of Michigan's 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

More at www.consumersenergy.com.

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GE Energy ships its 10,000th 1.5-megawatt wind turbine

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GE Energy has shipped its 10,000th 1.5-megawatt wind turbine. The unit was shipped to FPL Energy for the Ashtabula Wind Energy Center located in North Dakota.

GE's 1.5-megawatt machines have been installed in 19 countries and have accumulated more than 130 million operating hours, producing more than 78,000 gigawatt-hours of cleaner, wind-generated electricity.

The company said GE's fleet of 10,000 1.5-megawatt machines can power more than five million homes and produce more than 50 million megawatt-hours annually.

Since entering the wind business in 2002, GE has continued to advance the performance and reliability of the 1.5-megawatt wind turbine through GE-designed technology including pitch systems, blades and gearboxes; improved component robustness; and better diagnostic capabilities and controls. The result is continuous improvement in overall fleet availability to a level over 98 percent for units commissioned since 2007.

Victor Abate, vice president-renewables for GE Energy, said, "Since 2002, we have invested more than \$800 million to drive reliable and efficient wind turbine technology. Continuing this investment is part of our overall commitment to wind power, which will be an integral part of the world energy mix throughout the 21st century."

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Vestas picks Mass. over Colorado

Denver Business Journal - by [Cathy Proctor](#)

Vestas, the Danish wind turbine manufacturer, announced Monday it will put its North American headquarters in Portland, Ore., and is opening a new wind research facility in Boston, Mass.

Colorado apparently was in the running for the research facility, but not for the North American headquarters, said Laura Brandt, manager of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, an arm of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.

Vestas announced last summer its first North American research division would be in Texas. The company has had its North American administrative offices in Portland since 2002.

In March, Vestas opened a manufacturing plant in Windsor that makes blades for the giant turbines that generate energy from the wind. The company has also announced more Colorado manufacturing plants — for blades and nacelles, which house the gears, in Brighton, and a tower plant in Pueblo.

“At this point in time we know we’re getting in the neighborhood of 2,500 jobs and \$660 million in investment for the plants. What else we might be looked at for, we don’t know,” Brandt said.

“We have a lot here and I’d hope in the future we’ll have more,” she said.

Vestas has told the chamber it expects to have several research centers scattered around the country, Brandt said.

Colorado was in the running for the Texas research center and was “in the background” for additional research facilities, she said.

The Boston research center will develop generators, converters and control technologies for next-generation wind turbines in cooperation with Vestas technology centers in Houston, Asia, India and Europe, Vestas said.

“Our new Massachusetts technology hub brings together an exceptionally well qualified team of experts in generator and power conversion technology in a region that provides some of the most advanced engineering and science in the world,” Finn Strøm Madsen, president of Vestas Technology R&D division, said in a statement. “This new hub is another important step in our global strategy to maintain Vestas’ market-leading position as No. 1 in Modern Energy.”

The headquarters in Portland, for the Vestas Americas division, is expected to be over 500,000-square-foot and built to attain a platinum level of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction, the company said.

Vestas Americas is responsible for wind turbine sales, installation, and service and maintenance in North America.

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