

Wind Energy Bringing Jobs to North Dakota

With national and state emphasis on finding “green” energy sources, wind farms have continued to sprout up around the state. North Dakota presently has almost 500 operating wind turbines that produce enough energy to power over 200,000 homes. And, there are many more windmills now being erected or planned in the state, including Ward and surrounding counties.

Basin Electric through their Prairie Winds Project has plans to construct 77 turbines 14 miles south of Minot along Highway 83. They already have 2 operating windmills south of Minot. EHN/Xcel Energy through the Velva Wind Project has 18 operating windmills. Now under construction is the Rugby Wind Farm owned by Iberdola, Inc.f/k/a PPM Energy, which will have 71 windmills up and running in the near future.

But dwarfing all the others is a wind project to be constructed in Ward, Burke and Mountrail counties, stretching along 43,000 acres from Berthold to Columbus. This project, called Hartland Wind Farm, will be one of the world’s largest when completed. It will be constructed in 2 phases with 333 turbines erected in each phase. Phase one is scheduled for 2009 to 2010 with completion anticipated about four years later. The second phase is set to begin possibly in 2011 or 2012. Two firms are partnering on this massive project; Denali Energy of Baxter, MN and Montgomery Energy Partners of Houston, TX.

For job seekers looking to cash in on the wind energy boom, try doing a statewide search using the keywords “wind farm” on the JSND website www.jobsnd.com. This search has been designed to bring up job openings for employers involved in wind energy production; jobs from secretarial to construction to electricians, etc.

With so many wind turbines going up, the future should show an increase in the demand for workers trained in wind turbine maintenance. For those individuals interested in acquiring the skills needed for maintenance of the windmills, Lake Region State College at Devils Lake will offer their first classes this fall for Wind Energy Technicians. For more information on the Wind Energy Technician program call 800-443-1313 or 701-662-1519 or check out the program at: <http://www.lrsc.edu/programs/default.asp?ID=786>