

Wind Energy and Communities



To truly understand what wind energy means for families and businesses throughout the country, it is critically important to listen to the people who live and work in communities with wind farms.

These are a few of many stories about how American wind power is working hard to bring wind's economic and environmental benefits to local communities across the U.S.

Landowners

Richard Wilson: Owner, Wilson Farms, Calhan Colorado - "I've always felt like farmers and ranchers were the original environmentalists, they've taken care of the land, preserved it, done everything they could to make it more productive and to take care of it. And I think the wind industry contributes to that, because it's just like another crop - we're harvesting the wind now, with no downside."



Wilson Family, Colorado

Twane Reker: Farmer, Peetz Colorado - "With the extra income that we get from the turbines, and we're not getting much of anything from off the farm, that keeps us able to continue farming until such times as weather pattern changes, and things go back to normal."

Jonny Ussery: Farmer, Nolan Texas - "The wind turbines have been a very good change to our income base, we have seen a nice improvement in our livelihood, something we can share with our families, share with our grandkids."

Joe Bush: Rancher, Osage County Oklahoma - "Me being able to keep my property, having something to pass on, I'm proud of it. Being able to help the planet even in a small way, finding a new source of energy, I'm proud of it."

Jack Bossard: Dairy Farmer, Howard New York - "The farmer in me wants to be independent. And we've got a lot of grandkids growing up in this area. And they've learned a lot through the process too about how this operates and where their energy comes from and how it can be created. And it's all good."

Greg Gretencord: Farmer, Fowler Indiana - "It's just another way of harvesting the wind, just another crop we're harvesting on the farm."

Storm Gerhart: Landowner, Curry County New Mexico - "I get a good feeling when I look at that turbine. I take pride in it, I'm proud of it. You can get tired of the wind blowing in your face every day for day after day. But now, when you want to grumble a little bit about it, you can look over there at that turbine and you say, 'Well, that's good, that's good.'"

Economic Development Officials

Paul Jackson: Economic Development Director, Benton County Indiana – “It absolutely helps with the property taxes. We have had people moving back into the county, which is always a good thing.”

Myra Pancrazio: Executive Director, Economic Development Association, Estancia Valley New Mexico – “Renewable energy has been our highest form of economic impact. The dollars are extraordinary. This will help us be able to pave more roads, bring in more infrastructure and put more money in our county coffers.”

Gabriel Steinmeyer: Director of Economic Development, Neligh Nebraska – “The wind projects have been a great benefit to the community in a number of ways... both from being able to produce our energy locally and not be dependent on energy coming from other places, but also on having a new industry thriving here in our local economy.”

Darby Paxton: Executive Director, Economic Development, Holt County Nebraska – “Having the wind tower here is obviously going to promote more families to be here, so there is a direct ripple effect that is going to happen from that; more kids in the schools, and hopefully more returners.”

Educators

Cheryl Steckly: Superintendent of Schools, Lowville New York – “The wind project is certainly a part of our district’s landscape. Our students go to the wind farm for field trips. They study wind and green energy in their classrooms. We have a swim team called the turbines that practices here. It is part of who we are, it is part of what we see as part of our school district.”

Jeff Snyder: School Superintendent Lincolnview Schools, Van Wert Ohio – “With this opportunity with wind: it’s in our backyard, it’s incredible to see, it’s been the number one economic development we’ve ever had... They are here, they are turning every day, they are generating revenue every day; let’s talk about that! They are helping our kids every day; let’s talk about that!”

Elnabeth Grau: Superintendent, Grady Municipal Schools, New Mexico - “Since the school is now receiving some annual payments through the wind energy project, we’re able to do some long-range planning for facility improvements, academic enhancements that have never really been a reality until we have the extra funding in place to make it happen.”

Amy Shane, O’Neill School Superintendent, Nebraska



We are currently doing a building project to the junior/senior high school. This is a project that our school board had been working on for over 10 years. We’d run a bond election to try and fund this 10 years ago, and it failed miserably, and it was something that they never gave up on, it was just waiting for the right time. And with the increased revenue generated by the nameplate capacity tax, they were able to realize that dream and it’s in progress now, so...

We’ll be building three state-of-the-art science classrooms, a new life skills special education wing, a new middle school/junior high wing for our students in sixth, seventh and eighth grade, as well as a new gymnasium and a new band room. Our current band room shares a

wall with our library, [laughter] which is not the best situation. So that will be out on the edge of the school now and they can blow their horns as loud as they want to.

County Officials

Leroy Kirkman: County Commissioner, Elgin Nebraska – “[Wind turbines] bring revenue to the County. Our schools are getting smaller around here. We can’t keep our young people at home here. There just aren’t the jobs for them to do. You’ve got to bring some economic development back to your county in order to keep younger families here.”

William Tielke: County Supervisor, Holt County Nebraska – “If it’s a young guy that’s lived away and his heart has always been in agriculture and wants to come back, [wind’s] going to give them an opportunity. If their folks are happened to be in the footprint and received some towers, it’s going to possibly give them the opportunity to come back and take over the place.”