

NEWS RELEASE

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KDOT taps wind for energy savings

The Kansas Department of Transportation hopes to save some operating costs by tapping a plentiful Kansas resource – wind.

A wind turbine installed last week at KDOT's Osborne subarea shop is expected to provide 30 percent of the facility's electricity needs. And, there should be some excess electricity that can be sold back to the local power provider. Within a few weeks a second turbine will be installed at the KDOT office in Grainfield.

"Finding ways to stretch our budget is always important. So we decided to research the use of alternative energy to accomplish that goal at two of our facilities. And, this goes along with our on-going effort to support the Governor's green initiative," said Deputy Secretary for Engineering/State Transportation Engineer Jerry Younger.

Osborne and Grainfield were selected for the installations because there is plenty of wind and electricity costs are relatively high. The turbines were purchased for \$12,000 each from PIFM Power of Lincoln, Kan., and KDOT crews did the foundation work. The turbines, designed for residential use and mounted about 30 feet off the ground, are far smaller than the more familiar giants in southwest Kansas and along I-70 in central Kansas.

Including maintenance costs, it is estimated that the payback time will be 10 to 15 years. It is also expected that during periods of lower demand, the state will be able to sell back some of its excess electricity to the local power provider.

KDOT is partnering with Kansas State University, which will conduct a study of the small turbines.

“With minimal maintenance, we expect that this could help save the state money for years. The study will provide a way for us to consider its applicability for use at other area offices and rest areas,” said Younger.

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