

OPPD to decide on wind farm power use

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The Omaha Public Power District board was scheduled to vote Thursday on whether to purchase all of the power produced by a proposed wind farm near Petersburg that would create enough electricity for

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thousands of homes. The wind farm's 27 1.5-megawatt turbines would generate about 40.5 megawatts of electricity. OPPD's goal is to have 400 megawatts of renewable energy by 2020.

The 20-year energy purchase agreement would give the utility the option to buy the wind farm after those 20 years.

A company called TPW Petersburg expects to generate power from the facility by the third quarter of 2011. The wind farm would be a Community-Based Energy Development, or C-BED project, which requires that 33 percent of revenues from its operation go to Nebraska residents who have invested in the project.

Output from wind farms varies depending on weather conditions, but on average the turbines being considered for the Boone County operation would produce enough electricity to power about 12,000 homes a year.

The wind farm would be near turbines already under construction for a project that will deliver electricity to the Nebraska Public Power District.

The agreement would be OPPD's first venture into a C-BED project. The utility has been purchasing 10 megawatts of energy from NPPD's Ainsworth Wind Farm since October 2005 and 25 megawatts of energy from NPPD's Elkhorn Ridge Wind Farm since March 2009.

OPPD also has a contract to buy 60 megawatts of wind energy before the end of this year from the Flat Water Wind Farm in Richardson County.

The district owns a turbine in Valley that produces less than 1 megawatt of electricity.

FEMA workers to assess disaster aid

World-Herald News Service

A team from the Federal Emergency Management Agency hit the streets in Douglas County on Wednesday as part of Nebraska's effort to secure federal disaster funding to help pay for cleanup from record snowfalls.

Omaha Mayor Jim Suttle said the FEMA team went on a "fact-finding" tour of the county to find out whether snow that fell from Dec. 22 through Jan. 6 meets the requirements to secure federal funding.

If approved, disaster funding "gives us help and kind of softens the blow," Suttle said. "You never know until you ask."

Bill to help farmers get started advances

LINCOLN (AP) — Nebraska lawmakers would like to help young people get started in farming or another small business, but they're not sure the state can afford to do so this year.

The Legislature voted Wednesday morning to advance a bill (LB297) state Sen. Annette Dubas of Fullerton proposed to help provide financing for young farmers, ranchers or businesspeople.

The bill would allow the state to lend money to banks at a low interest rate to spur loans for budding businesses.