

# Wind project construction to start in April

Boone County officials received a progress report Monday afternoon on preliminary work for the planned Laredo Ridge Wind Farm northeast of Petersburg from Patrick Dalseth, project coordinator with Midwest Wind Energy.

Negotiation of a power purchase agreement (PPA) have been completed with Nebraska Public Power District, Dalseth said.

Lease agreements with landowners are reaching the final stages, and the final siting of the wind turbines was completed just before Christmas, Dalseth said.

Next step will be a Jan. 7 meeting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for wildlife habitat mitigation.

Final design work is being done for both the underground power collection system and access roads.

## Roads Agreement

Dalseth plans to return to the commissioners in February with a proposal for a county road agreement that will allow access to the wind turbines and other facilities from county roads, and provide for some temporary modification of roadways to allow transportation of the 54 wind turbines to the sites.

Although he did not have a map of the wind turbine sites, Dalseth noted that 35 to 40 access points onto county roads will be required for the wind farm service roads. The county will be paid for these access road connections.

A pre-project survey of the county road conditions will be conducted before the wind turbines are transported. In short, this agreement will require the developer, Edison Midwest Energy, to put all roads back in a condition at least as good as they were in originally, Dalseth said.

Commissioners will also be asked to consider a decommissioning and site restoration plan for the wind farm in February.

Dalseth brought along sample copies of both agreements that had been approved by the Knox County Board in 2007 for the Elkhorn Ridge Wind Farm.

Construction is expected to begin in April, barring any unfore-

seen delays, and the wind farm is expected to be producing electricity by Dec. 31, 2010.

## Construction Phase

First steps in the construction phase will be the grading and construction of access roads.

This will be followed by excavations, forming, reinforcement and concrete pour for the wind turbine pads.

The turbine sections and blades, along with large cranes to erect them, should begin arriving by late June or early July, Dalseth said. August is usually the key time for erection of wind towers because wind speeds are usually lower then. A maximum wind speed of 12 miles per hour is needed to lift the turbine blades into place. Each turbine requires about 1 1/2 days to erect.

Two general contractors will be chosen for this project, Dalseth said. One will be the contractor to erect the General Electric wind turbines, and the other will be the contractor to handle the road work and build the concrete bases.

Dalseth is now making a list of possible subcontractors in the area who would be interested in bidding on portions of the Laredo Ridge project. Contact information will be forwarded to Midwest Edison. Interested contractors can e-mail Dalseth at [patrick@midwestwind.com](mailto:patrick@midwestwind.com).

Permanent repair and maintenance employees will be hired and trained by General Electric. This will likely take place in August or September, and the company will advertise for applicants.

During Monday's discussion, it was noted that the Nebraska Legislature will likely be considering legislation this year to change the personal property tax on wind energy facilities. The proposal would extend the depreciation period over a 20-year span, rather than the current five to seven years.

Dalseth noted that Midwest plans to offer a C-BED ownership opportunity for the Laredo Ridge facility. This opportunity will be offered first to landowners who are leasing land for the project, and then to other Nebraska investors.