

MNR fire base first ever to try wind energy

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Tag: 0701181266

Edition: Final

Section: News

Length: 56 lines

Page: A2

BY DAN GAUTHIER, MINER AND NEWS

In what is believed to be the first of its kind at a government facility in the province, the Ministry of Natural Resources Fire Management base in Kenora will begin harnessing the wind for electrical power this spring.

Kenora District fire management supervisor Terry Ruuska said Wednesday they are planning to install five Vertical Axis Wind Turbines on the property, located next to the Kenora Airport, some time in March.

Each of the units is rated to produce an estimated 3.5 kilowatts per hour, which would provide a little less than half of the power needed for the base.

"Through the use of renewable energy, we're hoping to reduce our power consumption by 38-40 per cent annually," said Ruuska.

He said the turbines will stand about 10 metres tall including their towers, and will be adjacent to the base, on the edge of the property, which is leased from the Kenora Airport.

Ruuska said the project is a co-operative effort between the province and the makers of the turbines, *Cleanfield* Energy of Ancaster, Ont. The funding for the project is being provided by an Ideas and Innovation Funding Grant from the Modernization Division of Government Services.

This initiative will be the first of its kind for a government building in Ontario, which led to the funding.

"That was the whole idea behind the funding grant," said Ruuska of this innovative idea. "So we went ahead with it."

He also noted the co-operation they have received from the Kenora Airport, as well as the federal Ministry of Transport and NavCanada in ensuring the structures would be compliant with federal regulations for airport usage.

In addition, Ruuska noted the strong partnership they have forged with *Cleanfield* Energy for what is essentially a trial project to supplement the power used at the base.

"We're on the learning curve here," said Ruuska.

"But I'm very excited about this opportunity to try something new."

Cleanfield president Tony Verrelli is equally enthusiastic about the project.

"It's an exciting opportunity for both *Cleanfield* and the MNR's Fire Management office," said Verrelli.

He said installing these energy-producing turbines near an airport is an indication of how versatile their product is, as it can meet strict airport restrictions for the height of structures and still produce usable power.

"Kenora's a beautiful area for this," said Verrelli.

"You've got great winds out there."

Since the turbines can also be mounted on a rooftop, Ruuska said they may look into applying for funding to add two or three more turbines to the roof of the base, to further supplement their power supply in the future.

Illustration:

photo by Miner and News Staff

The MNR fire base in Kenora will be installing five Vertical Axis Wind Turbines, made by *Cleanfield* Energy, this spring to produce an estimated 40 per cent of its power from the wind.

© Copyright 2007, Daily Miner & News Unauthorized reproduction or Web posting prohibited.