

Jackson says idea for 150 wind turbines in city 'refreshing, innovation'

Kevin Werner, Mountain

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An idea to install about 150 wind turbines in the city had Hamilton politicians blowing more than hot air in the council chambers last week.

Cleanfield Energy Corp. is proposing to place the 350 pound, three-foot vertical-axis wind turbines on businesses and homes, including Copps Coliseum and McMaster Innovation Park beginning this fall. About 30 of these egg-beater style machines will be up and running by the end of this year, said Tony Verrelli, president and chief executive office of Cleanfield Energy Corp.

The company has been working with a McMaster University professor and a group of graduate students testing the turbines' capabilities.

The turbines will produced about 2.5kW with an estimated lifespan of up to 30 years. As to questions about noise problems, Mr. Verrelli said the system would sound like a typical household air conditioner.

The company selected Hamilton for its demonstration program because of the city's "unique" location with the Niagara Escarpment, said Mr. Verrelli, who grew up in Stoney Creek.

"There is a lot of potential here," he said. "This will be a showcase for us. The market (for wind power) is stronger in the U.S. than in Canada. There are no (financial) incentives in Canada."

Energy analysts are seeing the winds of change when it comes to wind power.

North American wind power revenues are expected to double by 2010 to \$7.5 billion from the current \$3 billion. By 2010 North American wind power plants will increase fourfold. The U.S. will produce about 28,000 MW, up from 6,700 MW in 2005, while in Canada, its wind power will balloon to 6,200 MW in 2010 from a scant 450 MW 2004.

Mr. Verrelli said Hamilton could receive about \$4.5 million in revenue, yet the city won't be responsible for any of the costs.

"This is refreshing to see this type of innovation presented here this morning," said Hamilton mountain councillor Tom Jackson. "It's encouraging and exciting."

"It's a wind-wind situation," said downtown councillor Bob Bratina.

"This is music to my ears," added Flamborough councillor Dave Braden. "It's clean energy. It feels good. This would be used to improve the image of Hamilton. It's the most progressive thing I've heard in 15 years."

Councillors agreed to create a wind power subcommittee to review the proposal.