

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Ontario's incentives to purchase wind turbines are generating a whole lot of takers

BY DEIRDRE HEALEY

A growing number of Ontarians are looking to make money off Mother Nature.

The wind energy industry has exploded over the past couple of years with both corporate giants and individual homeowners investing in the renewable resource.

Since 2003 wind energy use has increased by 80 per cent in Ontario and brought in \$2.5 billion in new investments.

Industry officials point to the government's recent commitment to buying wind energy and offering incentives to wind power producers as reasons for the surging attraction.

In the past, companies were reluctant to start up wind farms because there was no guarantee the province would buy the energy.

But the government has now set a goal to grow Ontario's wind energy capacity to 2,700 megawatts per hour by 2010 and 15,700 by 2025.

The current wind energy capacity is sitting at 271 megawatts per hour and the province already has another 1,000 megawatts per hour of capacity lined up for

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TIM TAYLOR

development over the next two to three years.

"There is a growing demand to produce wind energy from a business perspective," said Sylvia Kovesfalvi, Ministry of Energy spokesperson.

Lars Moller, president of DMI Industries, a wind turbine tower manufacturing facility that just opened up this week in Fort Erie, said the government's commitment to wind energy is the reason for locating in the province.

DMI is the first turbine tower facility to set up in Ontario and can produce up to 200

towers a year for both Canadian and American customers.

The Ontario Power Authority plans to launch a new program in November aimed at people with small wind turbine farms or residents who want to have a single turbine on their property to help cover their own energy use.

"Everyone wants to get into the grid, both big and small," said spokesman Tim Taylor. "There is a tremendous amount of interest in self-generation right now."

Under the new Standard Program, energy producers can enter into a 20-year contract and receive 11 cents per kilowatt generated into the grid.

Despite the province's recent growth, Ontario is only in the middle of the pack when it comes to harnessing the wind. Alberta is the current leader, said Robert Hornung, Canada Wind Energy Association president.

"But in the next couple of years Alberta will be surpassed by Ontario."

dhealey@thespec.com
905-526-3468



HAMILTON SPECTATOR FILE PHOTO

Cleanfield Energy of Ancaster is making windmills. That's Tony Verrelli with the egg-beater style windmill.

SPECTICKER... IN MEMORY S KITCHEN. CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES TRIUMPHED OVER HUNGER. D9
