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Man installs wind turbine at home to generate power

County commissioners voted to allow wind turbines on a case-by-case basis

PATRICK SULLILVAN/ TIMES-NEWS

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Bob White, left, and Jeremy Peang-Meth, with Blue Sun Renewable Energy, install a wind turbine at a home off of Kemp Street Tuesday.

By James Shea Times-News Staff Writer
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A gentle breeze blew on top of a hill in the Dana area Tuesday. Dave Van Voorhis, who owns the land, plans to use the power of the wind to generate electricity at his home.

"It's always windy up here," Van Voorhis said. "I think it's the ideal site."

He listened to oilman T. Boone Pickens talk about the value of wind power. He took Pickens' advice and got involved in the alternative energy movement.

"I wanted to do my part," Van Voorhis said. "I think going with wind and solar is the wave of the future."

On Tuesday, a team of installers assembled a vertical wind turbine on Van Voorhis' property and planned to have the unit operational by the end of the day. The wind turbine, the first in Henderson County, is expected to generate between 20 to 30 percent of the power needed for his house, but it could generate more.

"If the wind is cranking and everything is off in the house, (the power) could go back to the grid," said Jeremy Peang-Meth of Blue Sun Renewable Energy.

This means Van Voorhis will be able to sell the extra energy back to the power company.

It took Van Voorhis six months to get to this point and it almost didn't happen. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners only allowed wind turbines with a special use permit this spring when they updated the land development code. Several of the commissioners had concerns about noise and the potential for conflict between neighbors.

Henderson County Planning Director Anthony Starr said the commissioners wanted to try the concept out and thought allowing wind turbines with a special use permit was acceptable.

"There are some cases where they are appropriate and some cases where they are not appropriate," Commissioner Mark Williams said. "This gives the neighbors a voice. It's case by case."

Van Voorhis said his neighbors are aware of the wind turbine and are curious to see how much power it generates.

"They are waiting," he said. "They are waiting to see."

Federal and state tax credits offset some of the cost of the project and help make it economically viable.

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1. wncsport says...
   September 23, 2009 11:59:41 am

   RE: Link

   A few things I noticed:

   1. No picture.
   2. No listing of cost.
   3. The solar systems I am seeing on the Internet that supposedly work for about $1,600 has a battery that stores power when not needed.

   Now that Sen. Kennedy is gone can those folks who wanted those windmills just off the coast get them installed now?

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2. wncsport says...
   September 23, 2009 12:17:12 pm

   OK, I found the company's website: Link

   Video plays a nice little piano-based melody that emphasizes the unit is quiet. It is a "verticle windmill" that claims to blow when the wind is going at any direction.

   Claimas basic unit is $8,500 before installation. 30% can be a tax credit and supp. pays for itself in 10 years. Actually, the concept from what I see makes a bit of sense. It'd make even more sense to have some of these on grids with Internet repeaters on top and such to get them out in more rural areas. (Why not?)

   We look at how both parties blew that $787 billion stimulus when very little is for real "green" infrstructure. That would have made more sense than just mandating "cap and trade" to us.

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3. cowboy_wilhelm says...
   September 23, 2009 2:01:20 pm

Anyone interested in seeing wind power in action should go to Appalachian State University to see the **wind turbine installed on campus**. You can barely hear it when you're close. Ambient noise is much louder.

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4. cowboy_wilhelm says...
September 23, 2009 2:26:46 pm

a href="http://static.panoramio.com/photos/original/27102964.jpg" target="_blank">Larger image

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