

Invenergy on schedule to start wind farm construction

by Matthew J. Grassi
Herald Staff Writer

Local residents with concerns regarding the upcoming construction of a 30,000 acre wind project throughout Gratiot County were invited to The Center in Breckenridge last Wednesday evening for an informal open house

with Invenergy staff and local contractors.

The main objective of the open house was to update residents on the progress of the project.

Invenergy Senior Development Manager Kevin E. Parzyck assured those in attendance that the project is right on schedule, with

the turbines tentatively set to "go live" in early 2012.

"It's all happening very quickly," says Parzyck. "Right now, we're in the final stages of pre-construction. Actual construction of the turbines will start in earnest once all the frost laws are lifted by the county."

Once the frost laws are lifted, the first order of business will be completing the access roads that Invenergy will use to transport the massive turbine components. After access roads are completed, collection lines, which link the turbines together via an intricate underground network, will be trenched beginning in April.

Towards the end of April-early May, local contractors will begin pouring the 250 yard long, 843,750 lb. concrete foundations that comprise the base of the turbines.

As the foundations set, turbine components are scheduled to begin arriving in July through the end of 2011.

Turbine components typically consist of a large propeller-like

blade made up of three 150 foot long blades weighing in at 70,000 lbs total. A 75,000 lb. hub and 200,000 lb. Nacelle, (which basically houses the engine and generator) round out the top portion of the turbine.

The tower section (the large pole that rises from the base) can vary between three and four sections per turbine. Each individual section weighs 170,000 lbs. with a length between 70 to 90 feet.

According to Parzyck "once those turbine components arrive they are set right away."

However, this does not signal the end of the laborious construction process.

All the turbines must then be linked via the collection lines to an Invenergy substation. From the substation all the power generated is then aggregated and sent via a 5 mile transmission line into Midland County.

"That's where we tap into what's known as 'The Grid'," says Parzyck.

Parzyck hopes to have all the

turbines connected to 'The Grid' by fall, at which point the turbines begin the commissioning process.

"Now, when these turbines are being commissioned people will see some turbines spinning and some not," explains Parzyck. "That's just the effort we go through to properly configure and tune them."

Parzyck, whose home office is located in Chicago, also spoke glowingly of his teams' experiences working with the citizens and administration of Gratiot County on the project.

"The important thing here is we really enjoy working in Gratiot County," says Parzyck. "It's a very forward thinking community."

"We've worked very hard with the county and townships to put the turbines where they need to be. In the end you're going to get payments to land owners and property taxes to the community for schools, townships, and the county. We're excited the county sees the economic value of these turbines."



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Community foundation offering \$75,000 in grants

The Gratiot County Community Foundation has announced that more than \$75,000 is available in

the Spring 2011 grant cycle. Registered non-profit organizations are encouraged to apply

for grants funding programs that improve the quality of life of residents in Gratiot County.

Funding priorities include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency Services (police, fire, rescue and medical services).
- Youth programs.
- Community development and improvement programs.
- Homebound senior citizen programs.

For a copy of the application and policies, visit www.gratiotfoundation.org or send your request to gecf@edzone.net. The application deadline is May

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