

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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### NEW SPIN ON ENERGY

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brian Wallheimer<br/>Post-Dispatch<br/>Springfield Bureau</li><li>• St. Louis Post-Dispatch (MO)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May 11, 2004</li><li>• Section: METRO</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Edition: ILLINOIS<br/>FIVE STAR LIFT</li><li>• Page B1</li></ul> |
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\* Although output will be small, construction of giant wind turbine near Pittsfield in Pike County is called "the right thing to do."

Illinois' Pike County may have a new cash crop: wind.

The topography of the area, about 75 miles northwest of St. Louis, makes it one of the best areas in the state for "utility grade" wind, and on Monday, a rural electric cooperative broke ground for the first wind turbine in west-central Illinois.

"You've got the Mississippi River valley to the west and the Illinois River valley to the east, and that's the area in between," Jim Green, project manager for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's National Wind Technology Center in Golden, Colo., said in a telephone interview. "It's really a result of the unique topography of that area." The turbine is being build on the edge of a cornfield near Pittsfield by the Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative of Winchester, Ill.

Bruce Giffin, general manager of Illinois Rural, said its contract with its electricity supplier, Soyland Power Cooperative, prohibits Illinois Rural from producing more than 5 percent of its own energy. That's about what one turbine will produce, so Illinois Rural will not be building any more.

The turbine won't produce enough electricity to reduce prices for the cooperative's 7,800 customers, and Giffin said Illinois Rural would basically break even financially on the turbine. But he said there was more to building the turbine than saving or making money.

"If you can use renewable energy, it's the right thing to do," Giffin said.

**Kent Schien**, president of **Innoventor** Inc., an engineering company in Maryland Heights, said his company had been studying the wind along a 15-mile ridge through Pike and Adams counties for two years and was hoping that 200 wind turbines could be built there.

Such a project would mean millions of dollars in increased property value for the area and jobs for builders and people to maintain the turbines. Schien said the turbines would generate 300 megawatts of energy, enough to power 120,000 homes.

"If we produce it, it would be enough for this area," said Schien, whose company is not involved with the turbine project under way.

Much of that energy would be sent to Chicago and St. Louis, where Schien said there was more demand for it.

Schien said he was trying to get Illinois to require energy companies to buy a certain percentage of their electricity from renewable energy sources. He said the state had recommended goals but no mandates.

A mandate would make Schien's project financially feasible, he said.

The turbine under way near Pittsfield is expected to be finished in the fall and cost \$1.7 million. That money is coming from grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation and the state of Illinois. Illinois Rural is also taking out low-interest loans for some of the cost. The turbine is being built by Vestas Wind Systems of Portland, Ore.

The three-bladed turbine will measure 365 feet tall at full extension, and will be on a 15-foot square. It will be anchored in concrete 50 feet deep.