

WIND POWER

CREATING JOBS IN THE U.S.

The U.S. is primed in a big way for wind power — economically, politically and geographically — while the wind energy industry is emerging as a significant driver of new jobs for the American economy. With continued increases in generating capacity, the result will be a win-win situation all around.

By Michael Roney

The world's energy needs are expected to double by 2030, a challenge that is further heightened by concerns about reducing CO₂ emissions and the decreasing reserves and unprecedented costs for fossil fuels. As business, government and science address these dynamic realities, continued economic growth hangs in the balance.

As a renewable and clean source of energy, wind power has emerged as a significant part of the overall solution, accounting for about 30% of the entire new power-generating capacity added in the U.S. in 2007. Its unique infrastructure allows capacity to be added quickly while contributing to the energy security that's become increasingly important in today's world. At the same time, development in wind technology, rising fuel prices and federal and state policies help drive further demand for wind power.

With its vast tracts of open space and excellent wind resources, the U.S. is particularly well positioned to take advantage of wind power's benefits. In fact, it's already the world's second-largest wind market, with installed generating capacity of more than 16,800 megawatts (2007), or enough electricity for approximately 4.5 million American households. According to The Wind Coalition, Texas boasts the country's largest wind-generating capacity, accounting for 26% of the nation's total installed wind capacity, or the equivalent of the electricity needed to power more than 1 million Texas homes.

As capacity continues to grow in the U.S., further employment

opportunities will follow. A recently published report from the U.S. Department of Energy, "20% Wind Energy by 2030," projects that with wind power covering 20% of electricity needs, wind power could support roughly 500,000 jobs in the U.S., with an average of more than 150,000 workers directly employed by the wind industry.

"The U.S. wind power industry is a bright spot in our economy," says AWEA Executive Director Randall Swisher. "Every megawatt of installed wind power creates employment in manufacturing, construction and operations as well as jobs in advertising, office support, environmental assessment and other related professions. America's vast wind resources have barely been tapped, and we have only just begun to see wind's potential to generate broad economic growth."

Industry pioneer Vestas is one of the companies working to make the "20% Wind Energy by 2030" vision a reality, and the company's own success mirrors the rise of wind power. Growing from a staff of approximately 60 people in 1987, today the company is a global, market-leading group with over 15,000 employees focused on the development, manufacturing, sales, marketing and maintenance of wind power systems. Vestas already has installed over 35,000 wind turbines worldwide, of which over 9,400 are installed on U.S. soil.

Despite the challenges that lie ahead, there are grounds for optimism, pointing to a job-rich and increasingly energy-secure future for the U.S.

www.vestas.com

