



West Texas Wind Wire

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U.S. House passes wind incentive extension --

Debate shifts back to U.S. Senate

West Texas continues to set the pace for the Western Hemisphere, and Texas is becoming active in global manufacturing and operations recruitment. 2008 will set records for intensity of wind project development and for wind-related job growth in Texas.



ERCOT, PUC make progress on transmission expansion for bold wind growth targets

Spring 2008 is the season for the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to make major strides in their efforts to dramatically upgrade the Texas electric transmission grid.

As directed by the Texas Legislature, the PUC has progressed through the first phases of their competitive renewable energy zone (CREZ) process and is poised to consider specific corridor plans for robust upgrades in the state's electric network.

The PUC is conducting discussions with multiple companies that have proposed construction of transmission lines that will enhance connections between the wind generation region and the state's major metropolitan areas.

In addition, ERCOT is scheduled to deliver transmission upgrade concepts to the PUC on April 2. The PUC intends to order construction of specific lines and other transmission upgrades no later than 2009. Some PUC



Texas industry hangs in limbo until Congress & President act

The U.S. House of Representatives in February passed an extension of the federal Production Tax Credit (PTC) that has been a pivotal driver of investment and regional revitalization for West Texas.

Although the House passed the measure by a vote of 236 to 182, several Texas legislators voted against the bill's extension of the wind energy PTC, including West Texas representatives Mike Conaway, Randy Neugebauer, and Mac Thornberry. The West Texas GOP members have called for a 10-year extension of the wind PTC but oppose the way that the current bills before the House would pay for the wind energy incentives.

Action now shifts to the U.S. Senate, where the wind energy PTC has already failed twice in 2008 -- by only one vote each time. On both occasions, the two U.S. Senators from Texas have voted against the wind energy PTC extension as brought before the Senate.

The American Wind Energy Association projects that more than 100,000 jobs and almost \$20 Billion in *new* wind energy investment will be put at risk if the Congress allows the PTC to expire.

targets for transmission upgrades would enable as much as 25,000 MW of new electric generation across West Texas.



Houston hosts Windpower '08

Houston will draw more than 8,000 wind energy leaders from around the globe for the world's largest wind energy conference. Windpower '08 is the American Wind Energy Association's annual conference, and will take place from June 1-4, 2008 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Hundreds of West Texans will be an important part of Windpower '08, showcasing their businesses, their communities, and the state of the art wind projects that span our vast region.

More than 600 exhibitors are already reserved for the expo hall, including several West Texas communities, regional alliances, colleges, businesses, and industries. As with the expo at Windpower '07 in Los Angeles, most exhibits by the major wind energy companies and turbine manufacturers will feature West Texas projects.

There will be three days of informative conference seminars, as well as dozens of business networking events relevant to West Texas wind energy interests.

For registration and more information, please visit www.awea.org.

Texas Tech offers short course on wind engineering and economics



As Texas is by far the leader in wind energy operations and future development, Texas industries, Texas workers, Texas communities, and the Texas economy will suffer the greatest losses to future prosperity if the PTC is not extended.

Billions of dollars in Texas investment and thousands of jobs for Texans are at risk.

We look forward to congratulating our U.S. Senators on a job well done when the PTC is extended by Senate action this spring.

For more information, see the American Wind Energy Association website at www.awea.org.



Panhandle gears up for action

Community leaders, landowners, and wind developers across the Panhandle have become increasingly active as wind energy development and transmission expansion move closer to reality on the High Plains.

Communities from Amarillo to Tulia to Miami are holding regular strategy meetings to maximize community economic benefits from the wind energy industry.

Dr. Andy Swift and Dr. Jamie Chapman of Texas Tech University's Wind Science and Engineering Research Center will present a three-day short course entitled "Introduction to Wind Power Systems: Technology and Economics".

The intensive seminar will take place June 9-11, 2008 at Texas Tech's outreach and Distance Education Building on the Lubbock campus. The short course is co-sponsored by the West Texas Wind Energy Consortium.

Interactive classroom lectures will take place on June 9-10, and Texas Tech faculty will lead participants on a wind project tour on June 11. In addition, the American Wind Power Center will host a reception, guided tour, and dinner on the evening of June 9.

Specific course topics include wind characteristics and measurement, conversion of wind energy to electricity, wind turbine architecture and technology, economics of wind energy, and emerging wind energy applications.

The course is especially well-suited to independent wind energy developers, wind energy staff seeking upward mobility, economic development staff from communities seeking wind energy manufacturing and service operations, engineers, and others.

For registration and additional information, please visit www.ode.ttu.edu/outreach.



Texans look across the ocean to recruit new wind jobs to region

West Texas community leaders and representatives of Governor Rick Perry are actively courting European wind component manufacturers and operations companies in 2008.

High Plains and South Plains universities such as Texas Tech University and West Texas A&M University are playing leading roles, given their long-term experience in wind science and alternative energy development.

Community economic development institutions, such as the Pampa Economic Development Corporation and the Floydad Economic Development Corporation, and wind energy developers, such as Mesa Power, have sponsored charter bus excursions to Sweetwater and other heavily developed wind energy areas.

The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation has become a regular trans-Atlantic frequent flyer with staff dispatched to European wind energy expos in Berlin and Brussels in recent months.

The West Texas Wind Energy Consortium has members throughout the Panhandle and the South Plains and has held recent town hall meetings and strategy sessions in Amarillo, Tulia, Miami, Lamesa, and other communities in 2008. Lauren Moore, a WTWEC intern at Texas Tech University, has been assigned to work with Swisher County officials on a wind energy action plan.

WTWEC is working with economic development leaders in Amarillo, Pampa, and other communities to host regular monthly program luncheons in the High Plains region later in 2008.

The Governor's Office, the West Texas Wind Energy Consortium, and West Texas communities such as Amarillo and Sweetwater will be represented at the annual conference of the European Wind Energy Association in Brussels, Belgium from March 31-April 3.

Doug Ridge of the Texas Workforce Commission will represent Texas Governor Rick Perry and Texas Secretary of State Phil Wilson in Brussels. Mortada Mohamed of Governor Perry's staff represented the state at a Germany-USA wind energy conference in Berlin in February.

Speakers at the Berlin conference included West Texas Wind Energy Consortium executive director Greg Wortham as the keynote speaker (substituting for Secretary of State Wilson) and Rick Walker of Sustainable Energy Strategies. Walker has been an active leader on many Texas wind projects from Fort Davis to Trent to Roscoe and beyond.

AWEA executive director Randall Swisher was the only non-Texan among the U.S. delegation to speak at the Berlin event.

The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation sent two representatives to Berlin and Brussels, and Sweetwater has also been represented.

Operation Hometown USA

US Army photo by Steve Grzedzinski -- 3-28-2008 -- US Army electronic integrated systems mechanic Paul Vanluvender, deployed.



Regional leaders are working to address a shortage of skilled workforce via the West Texas Wind Energy Consortium and Green Collar Vets (www.greencollarvets.org).

The region's first "Operation Hometown USA" career placement event will take place on April 18-19 in Sweetwater, with more than 20 wind energy employers and more than 10 major non-wind employers scheduled to participate. Employers and communities from Abilene to Odessa are committing to this inaugural effort.

The career event is co-sponsored by such groups as

WTWEC, Green Collar Vets, Texas State Technical College - West Texas, Training Texas, the West Central Texas Workforce Board, Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association, Sweetwater Enterprise for Economic Development, Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce, Mitchell County Board of Economic Development (Colorado City), Odessa Chamber of Commerce, and others.

The mission of Green Collar Vets is to transition military personnel to new long-term, high-paying wind energy jobs in West Texas. This will occur through Green Collar Vets' ongoing 24/7 portal connection with military personnel (current and recently separated from the military) and on-the-ground efforts by Green Collar Vets, West Texas leaders, and wind energy employers.

Texas State Technical College has also recently launched parts of its groundbreaking wind turbine technology degree program online, so that deployed military and others can take certain classroom segments off-site. Final field work components would take place in West Texas.



West Texas wind energy welder

Upcoming Events

March 31-April 3 -- Brussels, Belgium -- EWEA's European Wind Energy Conference -- www.ewec2008.info

April 24 -- Sweetwater -- WTWEC luncheon -- TSTC West Texas

May 22 -- Sweetwater -- WTWEC luncheon -- TSTC West Texas

June 1-4 -- Houston -- AWEA's Windpower '08 -- www.windpowerexpo.org

June 19-20 -- Sweetwater -- Wind Law III -- TSTC West Texas

June 26 -- Sweetwater -- WTWEC luncheon -- TSTC West Texas

July 9-10-11 -- Trent -- 4th Annual West Texas Wind Energy Trade Fair

West Texas Wind Energy Consortium

The West Texas Wind Energy Consortium brings together the spectrum of wind energy stakeholders across our region -- school districts, counties, economic development corporations, heavy industry, small business, farmers, ranchers, colleges, wind companies, chambers of commerce, cities, electric utilities, and more. We represent the 6th largest wind energy operations "nation" in the world. We represent more than 1,000,000 West Texans covering more than 100,000 square miles from Dallas-Fort Worth to El Paso and Dalhart to Del Rio and beyond. We invite you to join us at www.WestTexasWind.us.

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Wind Law III

The Nation's original field law seminar in wind energy law returns June 19-20, 2008 in Sweetwater as the West Texas Wind Energy Consortium, Texas Tech University School of Law, and Texas State Technical College again join forces for the 3rd Annual Wind Law Institute. The unique event provides continuing legal education (CLE) credits for lawyers -- and valuable training for non-lawyers, as well -- through a combination of seminars on the latest practical wind energy issues and interaction with wind energy professionals in the field. Wind Law III will again feature tours of the world's most intensive wind energy development region -- including the USA's three largest wind energy projects, a wide array of cutting edge turbine types, the TSTC-owned DeWind 2.0 MW turbine, and the GE Wind Energy Operations Center. Limited to the first 100 registrants. Registration information will be released soon. Watch www.law.ttu.edu/career/events for more information.