

Menard Electric Cooperative to Purchase Renewable Wind Energy

Menard Electric Cooperative (MEC) will have a portion of its power supply coming from renewable wind energy through its membership in Prairie Power, Inc, (PPI). MEC purchases its wholesale electricity from PPI, a generation and transmission cooperative located in Jacksonville. PPI has purchased 20 megawatts of renewable wind energy from the Pioneer Trails Wind Farm to be developed east of Paxton.

PPI and two other generation and transmission cooperatives serving 21 of the state's electric distribution cooperatives and their 540,000 consumer members, has entered into an 18-year power purchase agreement with Pioneer Trail Wind Farm, LLC, an affiliate of E.ON Climate and Renewables North America (EC&RNA). The agreement was coordinated through the National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO), which was formed to promote and facilitate the development of economically viable renewable energy resources for its member cooperatives across the United States.

"Our Pioneer Trail Wind Farm is expected to provide clean power to approximately 45,000 households in the central Illinois region using North American made turbines, blades and towers," said Steve Trenholm, CEO, EC&RNA. "This project projects to spend more than \$29 million dollars in local taxes, paying \$8 million in local salaries and more than \$50 million to land-owners. We expect to employ about 200 people during construction and also expect to establish 8 to 10 permanent positions for the life of the wind farm."

Jay Bartlett, President/CEO of Prairie Power, said the state's cooperatives have taken a conservative but long-term approach to renewable energy. He said, "Our member cooperatives are purchasing both the energy and renewable energy credits (RECs) produced by this project over a long period of time. This provides renewable energy system developers like E.ON, with a steady source of revenue to finance the construction

of additional renewable energy projects in Illinois."

According to Lynn Frasco, General Manager of MEC, "the wind farm will indeed be good for Menard Electric Cooperative's members. The project will eliminate more than 316,000 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions per year and should have minimal impact on the cooperative's cost of power to its consumer members."

