

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
4/8/2008

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Wind Study May Produce First Full-Scale Wind Turbine at an Indiana High School

West Lebanon, Indiana (4/8/2008) On March 26th, 2008 the Metropolitan School District of Warren County cast its future into the wind, electrically speaking of course. MSD of Warren County has installed a 200-foot MET-tower to collect and log wind data during the next 12 months at Seeger Memorial Jr/Sr. High School. After this initial collection period, a feasibility study will be conducted as a crucial step in determining the future possibility of installing a full scale wind turbine to offset electrical costs for the school corporation.

As a renewable resource, wind is classified according to wind power classes, which are based on typical wind speeds. The Warren County School District is located southwest of Lafayette in a Class 3 area, one of the few areas in Indiana which may be suitable for utility-scale wind development. The Indiana Office of Energy and Defense Development approved a grant for the feasibility study and are hopeful that the data gathered in this Class 3 wind location will encourage future wind development throughout the State. Warren County's local REMC and Wabash Valley Power Association have also supported the feasibility project. The MSD School Board and Administration are hopeful to work in partnership with REMC to make this a mutually beneficial project.

Specifically, the project aims to erect one or more 1.5-2.0 megawatt wind turbines at Seeger Memorial Jr/Sr. High School to help reduce energy costs for the school district. MSD of Warren County, like other schools are exploring creative funding to reduce energy related operating costs and enhance the learning opportunities for their students. "We are excited about the possibility of using a natural resource to generate electricity for the Seeger/Warren Central facility. One wind turbine has the potential to generate enough electricity for all of Seeger Jr/Sr. High School and Warren Central Elementary. The wind turbine can provide cost savings to the school district over a period of years and perhaps generate additional electricity to sell. This presents a unique opportunity for MSD of Warren County to be at the forefront of utilizing alternative sources of clean, renewable energy," said Terry Roderick, Superintendent.

Performance Services (PSI), an Indiana-based design build company that specializes in energy savings projects in K-12 Schools, has been involved from the beginning stages and provided the school with preliminary economics and coordinated with all essential partners to help the wind study become a reality. "We are excited that Indiana schools are considering renewable energy sources. It's our privilege to participate in this groundbreaking project by offering our expertise," said Tim Thoman, President of Performance Services. Joining PSI is Stewardship Energy, a wind consulting firm based in Illinois, who agreed to offer their experience and expertise regarding wind feasibility studies to the project.

At the end of the study, the Indiana Department of Energy plans to re-install the tower in a new location to continue uncovering the potential of wind energy in Indiana-- while MSD of Warren County hopes they will have some unique and unprecedented options for the board to consider that will improve the circumstances within the community for years to come.

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