

Sprint will buy much of the electricity produced

A mighty wind will blow soon

Kansas operation that will eventually power 33,000 homes is inaugurated.

Staff and wire reports



MICHAEL SCHWEITZER | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Chesser, chairman and CEO of Great Plains Energy, KCP&L's parent company, watched Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius sign a turbine blade Friday at the Spearville facility.



CHARLIE RIEDEL | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Project manager Phillip Duncan looks over a pair of 121-foot-long blades that will be erected atop one of the Spearville Wind Energy Facility's towers.

Each tower is 262 feet tall and, with blades extended, will reach 391 feet.

SPEARVILLE, Kan. | **Kansas City Power & Light's** wind energy plant, the **Spearville Wind Energy Facility**, was inaugurated by state and local officials Friday.

The facility will generate 100.5 megawatts — enough to supply about 33,000 homes annually when it is completed and all 67 turbines are operating. The first turbines should begin producing energy to the electric grid by the first week in July, KCP&L spokesman Tom Robinson said.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius — who has called wind energy one of the state's greatest natural resources — attended the ceremony along with local and company officials.

To date, the company has poured all the turbine foundations. Nine of the turbines are now on site, and the first of two erection cranes are being assembled to put them up, Robinson said. Parts for more than 20 other turbines have arrived, and the new electrical substation that will deliver the energy to the grid has been completed.

KCP&L has called Spearville the ideal location because it is windy, it meets the company's environmental guidelines, and it has the support of the community. The site is expected to have wind sufficient to power the turbines about half the time.

The utility said the center also should benefit the local economy and provide revenue to Ford County and Spearville-Windthorst schools.

The wind center also is part of KCP&L's plan that includes a new 850-megawatt coal-fired plant at latan. The clean wind energy and the retrofitting of two existing coal plants to reduce their pollution essentially were offered by KCP&L as ways to balance the effects of adding another coal-fired plant.

In April, KCP&L and **Sprint Nextel** announced that the telecommunications company would buy a significant portion of the electricity produced by the plant.

The electricity that Sprint will buy represents more than 75 percent of the average power consumed at the company's operational headquarters in Overland Park, the companies said.

Sprint Nextel will be saving more than 175 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere annually, Sprint officials said at the time.

The \$166 million plant is the third large-scale wind facility built in Kansas, with several other projects proposed throughout the state. The Spearville site, 15 miles northeast of Dodge City, encompasses 5,000 acres. Each turbine will take about an acre, and the rest will be farmed, the utility said.

The 112-megawatt Montezuma wind farm, owned by **FPL Group Inc.**, of Juno Beach, Fla., has been operating since December 2001, providing electricity to consumers in Kansas and Missouri.

PPM Energy Inc., of Portland, Ore., owns the 150-megawatt **Elk River Wind Power Project**, the state's largest wind farm, in the Flint Hills near Beaumont in Butler County. It went online in December 2005.

The answer, my friend

- Each of 67 wind turbines will produce 1.5 megawatts of electricity.
- The towers will be visible from Dodge City, 15 miles away.
- The project used 1,822 truckloads of concrete and steel, equivalent to 14 Statues of Liberty.
- Different parts of the structures were made in Texas, Florida and California.