

ENERGY CENTRAL PROFESSIONAL

Spearville wind farm project on track

SPEARVILLE, Kan. (The Associated Press) - Jun 16

Kansas's newest wind energy plant, the Spearville Wind Energy Facility, was inaugurated Friday by state and local officials as work remains on track to erect the 67 turbines slated to be built here.

The facility, owned and operated by Kansas City Power & Light, will generate 100.5 megawatts - enough to supply about 33,000 homes annually - when it is completed, the company said.

The first turbines should be producing energy to the electric grid by the first week in July, KCP&L spokesman Tom Robinson said. Others will go online as soon as they are completed and tested.

To date, the company has poured the all turbine foundations. Nine of the turbines are now on site, and the first of two massive 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.

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

KCP&L has called Spearville the ideal location for the facility because of its wind resources, it meets the company's environmental guidelines and it has the support of the community. 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.

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, state's largest wind farm, in the Flint Hills near Beaumont in Butler County. It went online in December 2005.