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Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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**GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF FREEPORT-STEPHENSON COUNTY ENTERPRISE ZONE TO SUPPORT
100 MEGAWATT WIND FARM**

Expansion will result in increased economic growth, further promotion of clean energy

SPRINGFIELD – Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today took another step to promote clean, renewable energy in Illinois by expanding the Freeport-Stephenson County Enterprise Zone to support a new 100 megawatt wind farm in northwestern Stephenson County. The expansion will extend benefits to Acciona Energy North America who plans to invest \$200 million in the creation of the wind farm. The EcoGrove Wind, LLC project is expected to result in the creation of 10 full-time jobs.

Enterprise Zones offer a number of state and local tax incentives to businesses that make investments to create or retain jobs in any of the 97 certified zones located in communities throughout the state. The program is designed to stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization in those areas of the state.

"Enterprise zones serve as an important incentive for businesses to invest in economically distressed areas, which helps to stimulate the economy and create jobs in those communities. This expansion has the added benefit of supporting a wind farm, which is an integral component of my clean energy plan to reduce the state's dependence on foreign oil and fight global warming," said Gov. Blagojevich.

"Wind energy is still an evolving technology, but further development holds promise for a cleaner, more reliable energy future for America because renewable sources, like wind, help to decrease the amount of greenhouse gases being emitted into the environment. Anytime we can do something on the state level to promote the benefits of renewable fuels, we should, and I'm glad the state could offer support to help ensure this project is a success," said Sen. Tim Bivins (R-Dixon).

"Illinois already shows very strong leadership in wind energy. This is a great opportunity to continue exploring the viability of wind energy development in the state, while also helping to bring economic development and create more jobs in the region," Rep. Jim Sacia (R-Freeport) said.

The project was developed by EcoEnergy LLC, a local Illinois renewable energy company. The Morse Group of Freeport will engineer and construct the facility utilizing their subsidiaries EcoEnergy Engineers, EcoEnergy Construction Management and Morse Electric.

"It would be difficult for us to move this project forward if not for the economic incentives available through the expansion of the enterprise zone. I am pleased that the state was able to see the significant benefit this project will offer for the environment and the community," EcoEnergy President Shawn Gaffney said.

"Investing in wind energy provides long term benefits in terms of offering sustained environmental protection. These investments also provide a more immediate benefit by helping to create good paying jobs, promoting a healthy quality of life, and attracting more development in our communities," said Brad Long, president of the Northwest Illinois Building Trades Council.

"Illinois is already among the nation's leaders in new wind energy installations, so being able to help facilitate construction of this project will help maintain our status as a renewable energy leader and provide much needed economic development to the region," said DCEO Director Jack Lavin "Gov. Blagojevich understands that investing in renewable energy is both environmentally and economically critical to Illinois' future – increasing our energy independence, creating more jobs, and making

greater investments in our rural communities.”

According to the American Wind Energy Association, Illinois ranked third in the nation for the installation of new wind energy generation in 2007, behind only Texas and Colorado. Last year, Illinois added 592 megawatts of new wind power generation, increasing the total state wind generation capacity to 733 megawatts.

Illinois' 733 megawatts of wind power generation:

- Generates enough electricity to power over 183,000 homes
- Represents over \$1.3 billion in investment in Illinois
- Created over 3,500 jobs in Illinois.
- Generate \$7.3 million per year in property tax revenues for local governments
- Provides over \$2.9 million in annual lease payments to Illinois farmers who lease land to wind farm developers
- Reduces emissions of carbon dioxide by 1,463,588 tons/yr, of sulfur dioxide by 4,639 tons/yr, of nitrogen oxide by 1,772 tons/yr and toxic mercury by 100 lbs/yr.

Acciona Energy North America is headquartered in Chicago, IL and is part of ACCIONA Energía, a world leader in the renewable energy sector. Acciona Energy North America recently commissioned a new turbine assembly plant in West Branch, IA and is active in projects throughout the Midwest. Acciona Energía is the energy division of ACCIONA, a world leader in infrastructures and services aimed at sustainable development and social welfare.

The Morse Group of Companies, with over \$100 million in revenue, unites renewable energy project development, specialty engineering, design, industrial products, construction and automation services to provide commercial, industrial and utility markets throughout North America with electrical and energy solutions. Incorporated in Freeport, Illinois in 1944, the Morse Group has offices in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Nevada.

Gov. Blagojevich's Opportunity Returns regional economic development strategy is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois' history. Since a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development just doesn't work, the Governor has divided the state into 10 regions – each with a regional team that is empowered and expected to rapidly respond to opportunities and challenges. Opportunity Returns is about tangible, specific actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses. It is about upgrading the skills of the local workforce, increasing the access to capital, opening new markets, improving infrastructure, and creating and retaining jobs. Opportunity Returns is about successfully partnering with companies and communities, both large and small, to help all of Illinois reach its economic potential.