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90 wind farm turbines proposed for Columbia County

MARV BALOUSEK
608-252-6135
mbalousek@madison.com

We Energies of Milwaukee wants to build a wind farm with 90 turbines and a capacity of up to 234 megawatts in Columbia County near Randolph, according to an application filed with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

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Each turbine planned for the towns of Randolph and Scott would be mounted on a steel tower 262.5 feet above the ground. Blade lengths would be 126 to 152 feet.

The Randolph Wind Project, scheduled for completion in May 2010, would involve about 20 miles of access roads, aluminum cables buried 4 feet underground, an operations and maintenance building and a substation with transformers and switching gear.

Moving cranes across the land will require installation of timber mats or temporary bridges across wetlands and waterways. A habitat assessment is being completed as recommended by the state Department of Natural Resources.

The project is in its early stages and its cost is still being determined, said We Energies spokesman Brian Manthey.

"We're working with folks in the area trying to determine where the wind turbines will be," he said. "We'll go to the PSC with an actual construction request to build this fall."

The utility's Blue Sky Green Field wind project in northern Fond du Lac County went into service in May. The \$300 million wind farm has 88 turbines that produce 145 megawatts of electricity.

The Randolph Wind Project is one of more than a half-dozen wind farms under development by power producers in Wisconsin. Wind farms also have been proposed near Arlington, Belmont, Brodhead, Cuba City, Darlington, Brodhead and in Monroe County,

John Bluemke, Columbia County planning and zoning director, said the towns of Randolph and Scott aren't covered by county zoning ordinances and the wind farm would be subject only to local review.

"At this point, I haven't seen a lot of opposition, but they haven't started to build the towers yet either," he said.

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