

Energy project seeks to harness canyon winds

BY TODD HOLLINGSHEAD
The Salt Lake Tribune

SPANISH FORK — The powerful winds coming out of Spanish Fork Canyon may be a good thing after all.

Heber-based Wasatch Wind is moving forward with plans for a \$13 million project to plant a field of giant wind turbines in the canyon's mouth, hoping to turn the sometimes destructive wind into efficient city power.

Since November, the company has been gathering data to determine the viability of having a wind farm in the area, and Project Manager Christine Watson Mikell said the tests have been promising.

"It's the best wind site in Utah," Mikell said.

If Spanish Fork's Planning Commission and City Council approve the project, Wasatch Wind will have seven 213-foot turbines installed at an industrial site 1 mile from the canyon by the end of next summer, possibly becoming the first commercial wind farm in the state.

Proposed wind farm



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A separate company nearing approval for a wind-farm project near Stockton, in Tooele County, could beat them to it.

Before Spanish Fork officials decide whether to give the green light to the massive windmills, Mikell and Wasatch Wind CEO Tracy Livingston are hoping to

Public input

Every resident within a mile of the Spanish Fork Canyon site and beyond will have a chance to raise concerns and hear about the project today at 6:30 p.m. during a town-hall meeting at the Spanish Fork Fairgrounds.

get support tonight from nearby Spanish Fork residents.

So far the limited feedback has been positive.

"The only impact to that area is visual; the towers will be tall," said Perry Frandsen, the property owner for the proposed wind-farm site. "No. 2 would probably be noise, but gosh, there is no real noise to speak of that is going to be impacting neighbors."

Turbine images superimposed on photos of the current landscape will be presented tonight to give residents an idea of

A computer-generated look at what the wind turbines southeast of Spanish Fork would look like.

how the project would visually affect the area.

Each 1.5 megawatt turbine has the capacity to produce power for more than 600 homes, Livingston said. Not only that, but the turbines could save up to 40 million gallons of water a year that are wasted through fossil fuel burning, he said.

"That's [water for] 6,000 or 7,000 lawns," Livingston said. "You put in a lot of wind farms, it's going to start having some impact on water savings."

Wasatch Wind is now working with PacifiCorp to establish a contract to buy the wind-generated electricity.

"I've wondered why they haven't done it a lot sooner than now," said Lana Hiskey, who has lived next to the proposed wind-farm site for 11 years. "I'm sure they're like telephone poles: you kind of forget they are there."

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Courtesy of Wasatch Wind



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