NEWS

TAYLOR: Winds of change

Published: Friday, January 16, 2009

share 0

By Anne Sullivan

» Click to enlarge

TAYLOR — The winds of change were expected to blow through the city Tuesday, but a software glitch delayed the plans until Friday.

In cold temperatures and snow flurries Tuesday morning, a wind turbine went up at the Petting Farm in Heritage Park. But when the switch was flipped, the arms didn't move.

After a warm-up period, the brake didn't release. Officials investigated and determined that a soft-ware glitch was to blame.

Representatives from Cresit Energy in Wyan-dotte, who installed the wind turbine, and the soft-ware company worked into Friday's subzero tempera-tures to get the turbine turning and making en-ergy. At about noon Fri-day, the wind turbine started working, said Robert Kulick, owner and president of Cresit Energy.

The turbine will gener-ate energy and serve as an educational tool at the Petting Farm. It cost about $24,000 and will generate 2.8 kilowatts of energy per hour.

"I'm just glad to see it's up; we were waiting a long time for this," said Bob Mach, Department of Pub-lic Works superintendent, as workers from Cresit fin-ished erecting the turbine before discovering the software glitch.

Mach was hoping to har-ness wind Tuesday night and immediately see the savings, but it didn't hap-pen.

"We'll harness wind for electrical power," he said, adding that with the solar panels it will be "a perfect combination" for educat-ing children who visit the Petting Farm about alter-native energy.

Solar panels are on the roof of the Petting Farm building, and the two al-ternative energy sources can work together to re-duce energy use at the farm, Mach said.

Once the purchase of the wind turbine was ap-proved, it took about four months to be installed be-cause the company was waiting for parts, Mach said.

The wind turbine is con-sidered small, Kulick said. It is 45 feet tall and the arms have a 12-foot span.

It is a wind turbine, not a windmill, he said.

"A windmill was used to grind meal or pump water in the old days," Kulick said. "A wind turbine, or wind generator, harnesses energy."

The concrete base for the turbine was poured and the pole arrived about two months ago, Kulick said. They were waiting for the head and the arms to arrive.

"The demand is becom-ing great and the supply smaller," he said of the delay.

The wind turbine was made in Arizona.

"This setting is ideal," Kulick said. "This is all about education. It is quiet. It is tall enough to be noticed, but not over-powering."

Other Downriver sites also are using alternative energy, Kulick said, in-cluding the Southgate Golf Course, Three Nick's Tap Room in Southgate, a cou-ple of residents and Wil-son Middle School in Wy-andotte. And, Southgate Veterans Memorial Li-brary is seeking a grant for alternative energy, he said.

"We really could set the trend for the nation, right here Downriver," Kulick said. "It's all about con-serving."

In addition to enabling the city to conserve energy with the wind turbine, Ku-lick said he used local con-tractors to install it in Heritage Park, including Fairfax Electric in Taylor, Douglas Electric in Wyan-dotte and Molnar Roofing in Riverview, which pro-vided the crane that lifted the 45-foot pole.