

## Pike County requires surety bond from wind farm developers

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PITTSFIELD, Ill. -- The Pike County Board wants to make sure money's in place to decommission wind farm turbines.

Board members Monday adopted a measure requiring developers to provide a surety bond when submitting a wind farm application.

Affinity Wind "is really close to filing an application" for a wind farm proposed west of Pittsfield, Pike County Zoning Administrator Angela Moss said. "They have the turbines numbered. They are ready to get things rolling."

Affinity plans to develop a 150-megawatt wind farm in a project expected to cost \$250 million to \$300 million. A 36-megawatt farm could become operational in the fourth quarter of this year, and a 114-megawatt expansion is slated for 2012. The company plans to build 75 2-megawatt wind turbines.

County officials looked at several options for decommissioning wind turbines, but "a surety bond is what they're using in other counties" with wind farms, State's Attorney Frank McCartney said. "We want to have some control over the project."

A plan proposed by the county's agriculture committee requires a "financial assurance level" of 20 percent of total project decommissioning cost in years 1-4 of operation. The level increases gradually over time until reaching 100 percent for years 17-20 of operation. The licensee reassesses to the project decommissioning cost at years 8, 16, and 20 of operation and annually at year 21 and beyond.

The decommissioning plan protects both the county and landowners with turbines on their property, Pike County Farm Bureau Manager Blake Roderick said.

"We really expect in not too many years the state is going to have a statute in place for decommissioning, similar to what's there for oil wells and cell towers," Roderick said.

Affinity officials also recently met with County Board Chairman Andy Borrowman, County Engineer Chris Johnson and Pittsfield Township Road Commissioner Parker Zumwalt to update what county and township roads will need upgrades to handle the weight of wind farm equipment and the turbines.

Borrowman said plans are under way for the farm's first 20 turbines to be placed west of Pittsfield and north of U.S. 54, in locations a little west of the turbine installed by Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative.

Affinity in January closed a joint venture agreement with Chicago-based Suzlon Wind Energy Corp, a subsidiary of Indiana-based Suzlon Energy Limited. The two companies will develop the wind farm under the venture called Surety Wind, LLC.

The St. Louis-based Affinity has been working in the county for three years and has basically taken over a project that Jacksonville-based Prairie Power proposed in 2008. That firm planned to build a 30-megawatt wind farm near Pittsfield.

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