

Wind Power In Idaho: 183 MW Ready To Blow

By Pete Danko | 02/21/11

A four-way collaboration between GE Energy Financial Services, Exergy Development Group, Atlantic Power and Reunion Power has led to Idaho's largest wind power plant. Actually, it's "11 sites in two topographically diverse regions in southern Idaho," according to the GE division, but despite the 70 miles between them the sites can function either as a single unit or separately, giving operators the flexibility to take advantage of efficiencies.

The sites – eight in Hagerman and three in Burley – have a combined capacity of 183 megawatts (MW), enough to power 39,700 average Idaho homes. According to a project fact sheet, the new plants more than double Idaho's wind-power production capacity, bringing it to 346.6 MW.

Power from the plants is being sold by the partnership, called Idaho Wind Power, to Idaho Power Company under 20-year agreements. An interesting twist is that technically, each of the 11 sites has a separate agreement with Idaho Power and had to connect individually with the grid in order to comply with state regulations on the size of renewable energy sources.

GE Energy Financial Services put the cost of the project, which consists of a total of 122 1.5-MW GE turbines and covers some 10,000 acres, at \$500 million. It said the project created more than 300 construction jobs in Idaho, even though only 175 had been anticipated, and that 25 permanent jobs also were created to operate and maintain the plants.

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