STATE SUCCESSES: USING OUTREACH AND EDUCATION TO TRANSCEND BARRIERS TO WIND ENERGY
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Abstract

Many states projected to contribute significantly to the United States’ 20% wind energy by 2030 goal have not yet achieved a first wind farm, and many more have not yet hit the 100-MW mark. These states are struggling with basic barriers of the need for understanding of:
• The wind resource
• Wind energy benefits and impacts
• WPA (the educational, manufacturing, construction, and stakeholder groups)
• Economic development, water, and carbon impacts
• Issues such as transmission, utility integration, siting, and wildlife
• Involvement of key constituents such as the electrical sector, the ag sector, and county commissioners
• Effective policy
• An educated public and an educated workforce.

Other states have partially transcended these barriers and are encountering:
• Organized pushback
• Land use
• Siting problems such as zoning, permitting, and environmental issues
• Interstate barriers such as transmission.

Objectives

Effectively achieving the 20% wind energy by 2030 scenario will require states to:
• Achieve public acceptance, education, understanding, policies, regulations, and behavior
• Understand how these changes will impact key stakeholders (e.g., utility, agricultural, educational, manufacturing, construction, and stakeholder groups)
• Economic development specialists, PUCs, landowners, environmental groups, and the general public
• Economic development benefits increases levels of public acceptance and builds a favorable market environment. After wind power capacity in Illinois grew from 50 MW in 2003 to 2,119 MW in 2009, the Center for Renewable energy at Illinois State University prepared an analysis, Economic impact. Wind Energy Development in Illinois, that showed that the 1,119 MW will result in $1.9 billion in economic activity over the life of the projects, including 6,019 full-time jobs during construction periods and almost 292 permanent long-term jobs.

Successes Achieved in WPA’s Partner States Have Helped to Transcend Wind Energy Barriers

Zoning, permitting, and public acceptance are potential barriers. WPA has supported research in social acceptance, property values, and siting issues. Results are disseminated through national Webinars and Web sites, regional training, and state Wind Working Groups.

Maintaining an adequate supply chain has been identified as a barrier to wind energy development. The Ohio Wind Working Group identified a plan and guided the Ohio Department of Development’s implementation of a $1.3 million project to identify, grow, support, and market the wind supply chain in Ohio. A “matchmaking” service allows turbine manufacturers with supply chain needs to connect with component manufacturers in the state. As a result, Ohio is transforming its steel and mining industry base to supply future energy needs and employing more workers.

An understanding and buy-in from key constituents transcends wind energy barriers. WPA has identified the agricultural and rural communities as key constituents and worked to actively engage them. As a result of a key partnership between WPA and the American Corn Growers Foundation (ACGF), ACGF executive director Dan McGuire has provided wind energy outreach to rural America for several years and in 2009 reached an estimated 400,000-plus ag community members by attending agricultural events, staffing exhibits, serving on panels, and providing interviews and presentations in states such as Nebraska, South Dakota, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri.