GOVERNOR'S MANSION TURNS TO WIND TURBINE FOR POWER

BY JAY F. MARKS
Business Writer
jmarks@opubco.com

A pair of wind turbines are now part of the Oklahoma Capitol Complex skyline.

The turbines were installed this week at the Governor's Mansion and a building leased by the Department of Human Services at 50 NE 23 as part of the state's focus on energy efficiency.

"Oklahoma winds are abundant and provide us the opportunity to reduce our energy footprint for generations to come," said John Richard, director of the Oklahoma Department of Central Services.

A first for nation

Oklahoma is the first state in the country to harness power for its Governor's Mansion from the wind.

Gov. Brad Henry said that is a positive development for Oklahoma.

"The wind turbine will pay dividends for many years to come in terms of cost savings and environmental efficiencies," Henry said. "Oklahoma can and should expand its use of alternative energies, whether its wind power, natural gas, solar or biofuels, and, hopefully, this project will encourage others to do just that."

The turbine at the Governor's Mansion was donated by Bergey Windpwer of Norman. The company also will maintain the 10 megawatt turbine that is expected to generate about 15,000 megawatts of electricity each year.

Bergey crews also installed the turbine at the building being used by DHS. The turbine is part of a full-scale renovation that will include geothermal heating, solar panels along with energy-efficient lighting.

Go green, save green

"Everything they're doing to that building is green," spokewoman Gerry Smedley said.

Oklahoma Energy Secretary J.D. Strong praised the projects as a sign of the state's commitment to clean, renewable energy.

"Governor Henry and the Department of Central Services should be commended for leading the way in deploying cleaner, cheaper, Oklahoma-based wind power at the Governor's Mansion and other state facilities," Strong said.

"In these lean economic times, it's particularly important to demonstrate that Oklahoma wind and other alternative Oklahoma energies are not only great for the environment and economic development but also great at ultimately saving taxpayer dollars at state-owned and operated facilities."

Berge Windpower's Ron Isley uses a guide line Tuesday to keep a wind turbine from turning as the final adjustments are made. This turbine will provide part of the energy needs of the Governor's Mansion in Oklahoma City.

PHOTO BY PAUL HELLSTERN, THE OKLAHOMAN