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# Reporter & Farmer

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## DWE announces first utility scale wind project

Dakota Wind Energy, LLC announced plans to take advantage of South Dakota's tremendous wind potential with the formation of the state's first utility scale community-owned wind project. The project is located in Roberts, Marshall and Day counties. This project has the potential of ultimately producing over 750 megawatts of wind energy spread over 700 square miles of agricultural land.

According to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), the state ranks fourth in the nation with the greatest wind potential. But when compared to other states, South Dakota's current installed wind power capacity is very low.

Dakota Wind Energy, LLC was originally conceived by South Dakotan Gerry Fisher.

National Wind, the project's manager, local landowners and community leaders have capitalized the company. It has formed an advisory board of nine state landowners/co-founders.

They are Donald Erickson, Dennis Fagerland, Gerry Fisher, Blair Healy, Tim Hofer, Walt Johnson, Bob Metz, Don Ogren and Curt Sampson.

Additional landowners and community members will become owners as the project develops.

"For community-wind projects, such as Dakota Wind Energy, size does matter. Utilities and institutional investors prefer larger community-owned wind projects because they have the local support

needed to move smoothly through permitting, site control and power line siting," said Patrick Pelstring, co-chairman. "This increases their likelihood of completion and gives projects like Dakota Wind Energy, a competitive advantage. Large community wind projects also have the capital available to afford the high costs related to wind developments of any size, including building a private transmission lines, which can cost millions of dollars," says Pelstring.

South Dakota has the wind potential to power 50 percent of the nation's electrical demands. This project, when all phases are complete, could produce enough electricity to power more than 200,000 homes and displace almost 2,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

"As a South Dakota landowner, I wanted to institute a wind development program that provides my family with the best benefits," said Fisher. "After much research, I discovered that a community-wind development approach is a great option, offering landowners and their communities multiple ways to participate and own a significant share of a wind project's economic benefits. Landowners have the opportunity to become partners in the project, not simply 'lessees.' Everything about the project is openly communicated, so it is rewarding to see our neighbors work together and get involved."