

Why wind is right – right now.



“It is estimated that wind energy creates 27% more jobs than coal-electric and 66% more than natural gas-electric per unit of energy”¹



Wind energy has a lot to offer communities. Not only does it provide a new source of income for landowners whose land has a good wind resource, but it also provides jobs in communities and a new source of tax revenue for all.

There’s more for communities to like about wind energy than the fact that it’s an innovative technology. It never pollutes the air, depletes water resources or produces waste of any kind, making it a wise environmental choice for communities across the country.

Believing in the power of wind.

Wind and rural Canada.

Rural economies tend to have traditional ties to the land and nature. In the last few years, however, industries associated with rural economies have gone through some pretty tough times – mining, forestry, fisheries, even local farms have seen their prospects decline. But there is a bright spot on the horizon and that bright spot is wind energy.

Wind farms provide a new tax revenue stream for local municipalities, which can be used for the benefit of all. New choices can be made – local initiatives like community centres, roads, park maintenance and more can be funded in part by this new tax base.

Compared to other types of energy generation, wind energy uses virtually no water; local water resources can be preserved for uses like irrigation, drinking water, fishing or simply left alone in its natural state to be enjoyed by all. Wind energy doesn’t interfere with the activities of rural life like farming and raising cattle. If anything, the revenue from a wind farm can help preserve and protect traditional uses of rural lands from other forms of development.

Land lease payments

With wind energy supplementing their earnings, farmers and ranchers can enjoy the benefits of a new, low-maintenance revenue stream while preserving their traditional way of life. But it’s not only the farmers and ranchers who benefit from wind energy. All landowners with a good wind resource, not just farmers and ranchers, have the potential to benefit from wind energy.

Land lease payments are the negotiated terms of agreement between the developer and landowner. They include specific details in the form of a binding contract in which the landowner agrees to let their land be used in exchange for a percentage of wind farm revenue or a flat fee. Of course, details vary greatly from project to project, but landowners can see revenue in the thousands of dollars annually for each installed turbine.



photo courtesy of Vision Quest

Wind energy and jobs.

With wind energy come jobs in project development, manufacturing, construction, operations and maintenance. As of 2006, there were more than 100,000 people employed in the wind energy industry in Denmark, Germany and Spain.

Currently in Canada, the construction phase of a wind farm development carries the most employment opportunities. There are also permanent jobs created in the operation and maintenance of wind farms.

Right now, most manufacturing jobs are where the demand for wind energy is greatest – in Europe and the US. But once Canada installs more wind farms, we expect to establish a local manufacturing base to meet increased demand.



photo courtesy of Brookfield Power

A natural tourist attraction.

Wind farms are objects of fascination for many and, as such, wind farms can generate tourism for the local community. Some wind farms get upwards of 60,000 visits a year and the benefits of even drawing a fraction of that amount of visitors to a community can be felt by many businesses including shops, restaurants and hotels and motels.

Wind farms generate a lot more than electricity for the community they're in.

They generate employment opportunities – both in the labour-intensive construction phase as well as permanent positions in operations and maintenance.

They generate new tourism opportunities and an increase in the purchase of local goods and services.

And they generate a new tax base that can help fund everything from street improvements to a new community centre.

Wind farms spark lots of new possibilities.



CASE STUDY

Pincher Creek, AB

This community is blown away by wind energy's economic benefits



Pincher Creek Municipal District and Town cover a 3,366 square kilometer area in Alberta's Southwest. The rapid 3,000' drop in elevation from the Rocky Mountains to prairie grasslands provides an excellent wind resource that was first developed in 1993 with the construction of a 19 MW wind farm.

By June, 2006, Pincher Creek was home to 169 wind turbines with an installed capacity of 167.45 MW – enough to supply 51,000 homes.

In the last decade, wind energy projects have injected over \$10 million into the local economy through the purchase of local supplies and services.

Long-term benefits include:

- Establishment of 3 new company offices.
- 21 new full-time jobs, with a \$1.4 million annual payroll.
- Estimated \$900,000 in municipal taxes
- Estimated lease payments to landowners of \$3,000/MW for every installed turbine.

Spin-off benefits include tourism revenue from visitors from as far away as Russia; \$5,000 in annual sales of clothing and souvenirs branded with the "Naturally Powerful Pincher Creek" logo.



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1: Source: A.K. Sanghi, Economic Impacts of Electricity Supply Options, New York State Energy Office