

MANITOWOC

## Herald Times Reporter

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## LOCAL NEWS

Posted Feb. 02, 2005

## Wind energy questions come to the forefront

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By Dan Fischer

At the January County Board meeting, several individuals presented concerns regarding wind energy systems and our new Manitowoc County Wind Energy System Ordinance. The state of Wisconsin has published recommendations for wind towers, and we took those suggestions into account when we drafted and passed our own ordinance. Some of our provisions match the state recommendations, some are stricter, and in one area we are more lenient.

Manitowoc County followed the state's advice on setback distances. We will allow wind turbines to be no closer than 1.1 times the tower height from the property line; 1,000 feet from a residence, public building or business; and provides for a road right-of-way of 500 feet or 1.1 times the tower height (whichever is greater). Taking the state's lead, our ordinance also includes the provision that all wiring must be underground except where it connects with overhead collection lines.

The state requires no setbacks from natural areas and conservancies. Manitowoc County's ordinance prohibits wind energy systems within ¼-mile of state or county forests, hunting areas, lake accesses, natural areas or parks. The state also had no limit on the maximum height of wind towers. Manitowoc County's ordinance stipulates that towers may not exceed 500 feet.

Manitowoc County is more lenient than the state's recommendation on noise limits from wind energy systems.

The county's current noise ordinance, although it does not specifically address wind towers, is more tolerant than the state's recommended 50 decibels. There is interest on the County Board to adopt the 50-decibel stipulation into our wind energy ordinance. There probably will be a public hearing in February on this issue, hopefully with County Board action to follow in March.

### Good news about jobs

We received some great news from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Badger State has been making great strides in adding jobs in the last 12 months, adding a net total of 63,600 jobs since December of 2003. This is a 2.3 percent increase, placing Wisconsin in the top 10 states for job growth in that time period. Nationally, employment grew by 1.7 percent last year. Our closest rival in the Midwest was Minnesota, which grew by 23,400 jobs, an increase of



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0.9 percent.

*Dan Fischer, Manitowoc County executive, may be reached at 683-4375.*

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