



Portsmouth Abbey Unveils Start of Wind Turbine Construction

Construction is underway on Rhode Island's first-ever utility-scale wind turbine!

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(Portsmouth, RI) A ceremonial ground breaking of Rhode Island's first ever utility-scale wind turbine took place today at the Portsmouth Abbey & School in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. When completed, construction and installation of this 165 foot tall, 660 kilowatt (kW) wind turbine will be the largest single investment ever made by the Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund, producing 1.25 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

The turbine is expected to generate 40 percent of the annual electricity demand of the Portsmouth Abbey School, one of Rhode Island's largest consumers of electricity.

"I am pleased that Portsmouth Abbey has made a commitment to clean energy with their construction of the wind turbine," Governor Donald L. Carcieri said. "By harnessing the power of this natural resource, the school will not only help the environment but will lessen its dependence on foreign energy sources."

The placement of utility-scale wind turbines to power schools, businesses and other institutions that demand large amounts of electricity is becoming more and more common as organizations of all sizes and serving all purposes struggle with rising energy costs and the growing environmental concerns associated with both fossil and nuclear fuels traditionally used to generate electricity and heat buildings.

"Everyone says that we should be fighting pollution and finding alternative sources of energy but then they are unwilling to risk it in their own neighborhood. As stewards of a beautiful property and as educators of students, we felt we should take a pioneering role and lead by example," stated Brother Joseph Byron of the Portsmouth Abbey School's Order of St. Benedict.

In December 2004, Portsmouth Abbey applied to the Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund for their support of the wind turbine placement at the Abbey. In addition to advisory services on wind turbine placement and construction, the RIREF made a grant contribution that is covering one-third of the overall costs of the wind turbine project.

"Utility scale wind turbine construction is critical for our state to move beyond traditional forms of electricity generation and start to realize the energy independence and cleaner air from clean sources of electricity generation," said Janice McClanaghan of the Rhode

Island Renewable Energy Fund. "This is the largest investment ever made by the Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund and we are proud and honored to be able to help fund this first-of-a-kind project in Rhode Island. We hope that it is the first of many large-scale wind turbines that will appear across the state."

Portsmouth Abbey & School is a community of some 15 Benedictine monks along with a College Preparatory School of 350 boarding and day students. The Abbey, which is situated amidst 500 acres on the west side of Portsmouth, RI is one of the largest customers of National Grid in the area and has been working diligently to combat rising energy costs through implementation of energy efficiency and conservation programs.

"This is the perfect example of an organization being proactive with the importance of energy efficiency programs and the purchase and use of clean energy," stated Bob Wall, New England Regional Director of SmartPower. "Portsmouth Abbey is demonstrating to everyone, from large institutions to the smallest household that clean energy is real, here, and working across Rhode Island. We hope that every Rhode Island resident, business and school take action now to maximize their energy efficiency and learn how they can utilize our growing clean energy industry."

Earlier in 2005, the Town of Portsmouth unanimously approved a special use permit application by Portsmouth Abbey to erect the now under construction wind turbine. Portsmouth has been a strong supporter of this project from the outset.

"We are proud to be the home of Rhode Island's first utility scale wind turbine," announced Council President, Mary Ann Edwards. "We hope that every community in Rhode Island will follow our lead and make the use of wind turbines as a primary electricity source a common occurrence across the state."

Construction Management for the Portsmouth Abbey turbine project is being provided by Henry duPont of Lorax Energy Systems.

"Large on-site wind power projects don't just happen", says duPont, "an extraordinary number of obstacles have to be overcome to realize a successful project. Hats off to Brother Joseph and the Portsmouth Abbey Management Team for their extraordinary efforts and to the RI Renewable Energy Fund, the Town of Portsmouth and all the other project supporters for making this exciting concept become a reality."

SmartPower is a non-profit marketing campaign dedicated to promoting clean energy. SmartPower's 20% by 2010 campaign encourages institutions, municipalities and individuals to make a commitment to obtain 20% of their electricity from clean sources by 2010. Please visit www.smartpower.org or www.gocleanenergy.com.

The Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund is dedicated to increasing the role of renewable energy in Rhode Island's electricity supply. The Fund, administered by the Rhode Island State Energy Office, has programs to help homeowners, businesses and institutions in choosing and purchasing clean energy systems, such as wind turbines and solar photovoltaic ("PV") systems and electricity products available without leaving your current electric utility.