

The Green Notebook

The Winds of Change

The winds of change have reached Delaware County with the installation of a small wind turbine planned for the Byers auto dealership off of Rt. 23 in Delaware. That's exciting news and a huge commitment to going green by the company! Kudos!

According to the Ohio Energy Office, wind energy is the fastest growing energy resource. I did a little research online and found the Ohio Wind Working Group, a forum on wind energy development information in our state. Stats on their website indicate that by 2030, Ohio could benefit from \$7.6 billion in revenue from the wind industry. It also states that total wind energy potential in Ohio is 66,000 MW—enough to power the state two times over. Ohio's first utility-scale wind farm (used to power electric to thousands of residential homes) is outside of Bowling Green (built in 2003) and, apparently, Lake Erie is uniquely situated to take advantage of the emerging Great Lakes offshore wind market.

Wind energy sounds promising—creating jobs and providing a renewable source of energy. Small wind turbines can be used by homeowners to lower electric bills or even go “off grid”—not drawing any electric from the power company. In some cases, homeowners could even sell back electric. Incentives to use these wind technologies are in the making, which might help combat the cost of installation.

With any kind of “too good to be true” scenario, using wind power has a few downfalls which must be overcome. The biggest one is the turbines only work where the wind is blowing (although you would be surprised how much the wind does blow at the heights of these turbines). The other is the noise of the turbines themselves, which can be quite loud if there are a few of them in one area.

This technology will likely continue to evolve and we might even see some new advancements coming out of the WindPower 2009 Conference and Exhibition being held in Chicago May 4-7. I wouldn't be surprised if more small turbines begin to pop up over the coming year around Central Ohio. It's an alternative energy I would like to know more about. You can learn more at www.ohiowind.org or www.greenenergyohio.org.

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