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Macoupin County wind data hits the Web

Macoupin County-Wind data from the Macoupin County site of a statewide wind monitoring project sponsored by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and conducted by Western Illinois University's Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA), is now available online at www.illinoiswind.org.

An initiative of the Macoupin County Board in cooperation with local land owners in the northwestern area of the county, a temporary meteorological tower (M.E.T.), standing 165 feet and installed in May, will record wind speed data for one year to forecast the amount of electricity that could be generated from the wind in the area. The tower is located in between Scottville and Modesto.

While it is too early in the project to gauge whether wind speeds will be sufficient for development, Roger Brown of IIRA said, the collection of the data is going smoothly.

"Our experience indicates that wind energy developers and consultants monitor the data we collect. They have initiated development projects where the recorded wind speeds have been favorable," said Brown.

The data collected in Macoupin County will also be used to make wind velocity maps of the state, he added.

Macoupin County Board Chairman Andrew Manar said being selected to participate in the study was important to the county board not only because it could help the county's economy, but because it shows the county's commitment to promoting renewable fuels.

"We feel that potential for the development of renewable energy and renewable fuels is a strong asset that we have in Macoupin County," said Manar.

The Scottville/Modesto area was chosen for the site because it has some of the highest elevations in the county, and the open spaces needed for a wind development. Bob and Marian Kerr own the site, chosen by IIRA.

A limited number of sites throughout the state are chosen each year. Macoupin County was one of the four sites in the state chosen out of more than 80 applications for the program.