

Wind Farm Planned in Holt County

(KTNC) -- A Minnesota company expects to begin construction this fall in Holt County on what will be Missouri's largest wind farm.

Minneapolis-based Element Power plans for its Mill Creek Wind Farm in southern Holt County to generate 200 megawatts of electricity that will be sold to Kansas City Power and Light.

Project Manager Scott Zeimetz tells the St. Joseph News-Press that the company has about 25,000 acres under lease with more than 100 landowners. The site is expected to begin operating by the end of 2015.

Meanwhile, Holt County Commissioners are continuing to take steps to set up an Enhanced Enterprise Zone in the county. That would allow the county to offer tax incentives to companies – including wind farms – that build in Holt County.

Holt County Clerk Kathy Kunkel says commissioners will meet this week to begin setting up a seven-member Enhanced Enterprise Zone Board. Kunkel describes setting up the board as a “multi-layered process” and she says commissioners are methodically going through the necessary steps to accomplish that. County commissioners will name five members to the board, the county's school districts will name another person to represent their interests, and all other political subdivisions will get together to name another board member.

The Board would meet with a business to negotiate tax incentives. The board would then make recommendations to the County Commission, which would decide whether to approve the incentives.

Holt County Commissioners began discussion on forming an Enhanced Enterprise Zone last summer as a way to spur economic development. Both Atchison and Nodaway Counties have Enhanced Enterprise Zones. Kunkel says it will likely be mid-February before the full EEZ Board is seated.