

Attorney to assist county with wind project contacts

(KMZA)--Nemaha County has retained a Kansas City area attorney to assist in negotiations with the developer of the proposed Soldier Creek Wind Farm.

James Neeld, who has extensive experience in complex energy negotiations, met with the Nemaha County Commission Monday.

Neeld will work on the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT), road use and decommissioning agreements with Florida-based Next Era Energy Resources.

More than 50 county residents were on hand for the meeting, which was moved to the courtroom due to the large number of people in attendance. Also on hand were representatives of Next Era Energy Resources.

Most comments were directed toward having protections for non-participating landowners who might be affected by the placement of the wind turbines. Questions were also raised about the affect the turbines would have on property values.

County resident Doug Wertenberger presented information to Commissioners containing setback requirements he would like to see the Commission follow when negotiating the PILOT agreement with Next Era.

Commissioners said they would address the concerns raised during the contract discussions.

The new wind farm is expected to be operational by 2020.

Next Era currently operates seven wind farms in Kansas.

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