

White Creek Wind Project Dedicated

By Dave Andrew

Under sunny skies on May 8 in the Columbia River Gorge, more than 300 gathered to celebrate the dedication of the White Creek Wind Project.

The 205-megawatt (MW) project, which began commercial production in November, is the largest United States wind project developed by public power.

White Creek features 89 2.3 MW Siemens wind turbines on 9,500 acres of ranchland in Klickitat County, 21 miles east of Goldendale.

It produces enough clean, renewable electricity to meet the needs of 38,000 Pacific Northwest residences.

The utility partners who initiated the project—Lakeview Light & Power (Lakewood), Tanner Electric Cooperative (North Bend), Cowlitz County PUD (Longview) and Klickitat County PUD—were represented at the dedication by board and staff members.

Others who participated in the celebration included Klickitat County representatives, local landowners and citizens, state legislators, other utility representatives, construction managers, workers and investors.

The four utilities are members of Last Mile Electric Cooperative (LMEC), a group of 12 consumer-owned utilities and nonprofits formed in 2000 to promote renewable power in the region.

Former general manager of the Washington Rural Electric Cooperative, Aaron Jones is considered the “father” of LMEC. He was the keynote speaker and was acknowledged for his role in the development of White Creek.

Robin Rego, general manager of Lakeview Light and Power, served as master of ceremonies.

Other speakers were Washington state Rep. Bruce Chandler, Klickitat County Commissioners Ray Thayer and Rex Johnston, Klickitat PUD Commissioner Randy Knowles, Cowlitz PUD Commissioner Buz Ketcham, Lakeview Light and Power Vice President Gary Jones, Tanner Electric President Tim Moore, Prudential Financial Group Managing Director Ric Abel, Meridian Clean Fuels Senior Vice President Tim McDonald, Port of Longview Executive Director Ken O’Holleran and Summit Power Alternative Resources CEO Brett Wilcox.

In an innovative financing arrangement, the four



Klickitat PUD Commissioner Randy Knowles was one of many dignitaries at the White Creek Wind Project dedication ceremony May 8.

utilities sold the project to White Creek Wind I (WCWI) in late 2006. WCWI is comprised of affiliates of Prudential Capital Group, Lehman Brothers and Summit Power. North American Energy Services oversees project operations.

Background Information On the White Creek Wind Project

Project construction began in the summer of 2006. Siemens Power Generation supplied, installed and commissioned 89 2.3-MW wind turbines, associated towers and other equipment at the project. RES America Construction Inc. built roads and managed the balance of plant construction.

The Bonneville Power Administration and Klickitat PUD built new electrical substations and transmission lines. Turbine components were shipped to the Port of Longview in June 2007 and trucked to the project site.

WCWI provided equity capital and is using federal production tax credits available to renewable wind projects. HSH Nordbank AG (New York branch) provided construction financing for the project, and Meridian Clean Fuels arranged the equity portion of the financing.

The four utilities have entered into 20-year power purchase agreements with WCWI. The utilities have the option to repurchase the project after 10 years. ■

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