

State official says Kansas 'gold mine' is in the sky

By John Van Nostrand
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California, Colorado and the Black Hills of South Dakota all have gold in their respective histories. Kansas Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson said Kansas can also have a gold mine, but people won't be digging in the ground to find it.

They will be looking up. Parkinson said Kansas can benefit from the development of wind-generated electricity.

"It would be like a gold rush to the middle of the country," he said. Parkinson was a featured speaker at the Colby Wind Summit held at City Limits Convention Center. "This would be the biggest boon ever, in my lifetime, in western Kansas," he said.

Parkinson said research shows winds are strong enough to turn turbines to generate electricity throughout western Kansas, specifically the counties that border Colorado. With continually increasing costs of other forms of energy, like oil, natural gas and coal, he said wind is becoming a more attractive way to generate electricity.

He said Kansas currently has 3 percent of all of its electricity generated by wind. In her 2007 state of the state address, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said her goal is to have 10 percent produced by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020.

Parkinson said other states have more wind-generated electricity than Kansas.

"Why is Kansas behind the times," Parkinson asked.

The challenges Kansas faces to increase wind generated electricity include location for wind

generation, utility providers to purchase the electricity and transmission lines.

"The first step is to find a great site," he said. "The hardest step is to get a utility to buy it, by far the most difficult."

Parkinson said studies, which may take up to four years to finish, are underway to improve electric transmission lines. One proposal is to install transmission lines from wind projects near Spearville east to Wichita and north into Nebraska to connect with other transmission lines. He said a cost estimate for transmission line construction is \$1 million per mile.

Parkinson also said some wind and utility officials have a perception Kansas is an anti-wind state and feared it is not an economically feasible idea in Kansas. Parkinson said the only area he knows of that is off-limits for wind turbines are the Flint Hills, a popular, scenic area.

Parkinson said wind turbines will increase in Kansas once environmentalists, utilities and consumer advocacy groups come together in an unprecedented way to make more wind turbines productive in Kansas.

Some western Kansas locations are in the early stages of wind generation. Projects in Gray and Ford counties already can produce a combined 212 megawatts. Of all the wind projects in the state, including the ones planned for this year, they total producing up to 1,013 megawatts.

Those megawatts also produce dollars.

"One thousand megawatts costs \$200 million with long-term land leases and jobs," he said. Kansas

is the seventh state in the country able to produce more than 1,000 megawatts.

"Kansas wind right now, for the most part, is used by Kansas. There is potential to sell to other states."

He said more people should utilize the winds in Kansas should certain things happen. He said those three issues are when wind generation is economically competitive to coal-based electricity; Congress passes a law to force all electric utilities to have a certain percentage of electricity produced by renewable sources and Congress passes a carbon tax.

Parkinson said wind-based electricity is becoming more competitive with coal.

"This map shows why we are so excited," Parkinson said pointing to places in extreme western Kansas where winds are usually the strongest in the state.

"I remember when wheat was \$4. Things are also looking up in energy," he said.

After the summit, Parkinson commented how wind projects relate to the debated, proposed coal-fired electric plants near Holcomb.

"Western Kansas does need base-load power," he said.

With proposals to sell the electricity from the Holcomb plants to out of state customers, Parkinson said western Kansas will still need a source of electricity.

The summit was sponsored by National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Kansas Rural Center, Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission and the Thomas County Economic Development Alliance.

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Area college plans revue

Cloud County Community College students involved in Concordia campus music, drama and art groups will present the first annual "Cloud Burst Revue" on April 30 and May 1 at the college's Cook Theatre.

The revue begins at 7 p.m. and is free to the public.

Performing will be Rolling Thunder Pep Band, Great Society Singers, Thunderbolt Dance Team and Cloud Circle Drama Players. Works by graphic design students also will be on display.

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Teacher's 'Lava Lamp' article published

An article by Todd Leif, Cloud County Community College physics instructor and science department chair, appears in the April, 2008 edition of The Physics Teacher magazine.

The article is entitled, "Lava Lamp."

The publication is circulated by the American Association of Physics Teachers.

The publication's cover also features a photographic example

of a Cloud County Community College student's work.

Leif writes about the classroom experience of bringing a Lava Lite lamp into his spring semester college physics course.

Student interest in the "retro" movement of the 1960s provided Leif the impetus for the article.

"It is an example of how an instructor can integrate 'real world' objects into everyday instruction," Leif said.

"Physics education reform is also examining ideas from the 'retro' world of science," he added.

"The world of physics teaching is cyclic, like a swinging pendulum."

The full article is available online at www.cloud.edu, General Information, Cloud News.

For more information, contact Leif at (800) 729-5101, extension . 216.

Telegram
877-3361

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Cottonwood Ranch Sheep Dog Trials
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Wichita River Festival
May 9-17
Nine days of activities & concerts. Downtown Wichita (316) 267-2817 www.wichitafestivals.com

Wild About Moms!
May 10-11
Celebrate Mother's Day! Quilt show plus free shortcake & geraniums. Rolling Hills Wildlife Adventure, Salina (785) 827-9488, www.rollinghillswildlife.org

Derby Days Festival
May 30-June 1
Carnival rides, KidFest, parade, Shopfest, dog show, music & more. Derby High School www.derbydaysks.com

Old Shawnee Days!
June 5-8
Free weekend-long entertainment for the entire family. Concerts, carnival, parade & contests. Shawnee (913) 631-5200, www.oldsawneadays.org

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