

MIDWEST DIGEST

Permit Granted For Wind Farm In S. Dakota

PIERRE (AP) — A state permit was granted Tuesday for a 37,000-acre wind farm of up to 110 turbines to be built by Basin Electric Power Cooperative in southeast South Dakota.

North Dakota-based Basin Electric said when completed, the PrairieWinds SD1 project would replace its PrairieWinds ND1 as the largest wind project owned and operated by an electric cooperative in the United States.

Construction of the \$363 million, 165-megawatt project will begin when federal permits are obtained, Basin officials said. PrairieWinds ND1 south of Minot, N.D., has 77 turbines producing about 115 megawatts of electricity.

PrairieWinds SD1 is the second-largest wind farm in South Dakota that is either operating, under construction or has received a state permit, according to the South Dakota Wind Energy Association. The largest is the 300-megawatt Buffalo Ridge project in Brookings and Deuel counties.

PrairieWinds would encompass 37,000 acres in parts of Aurora, Jerauld and Brule counties north of White Lake. A 13-mile transmission line would be built to feed the electricity to a Wessington Springs substation and into the electric grid operated by the Western Area Power Administration.

Mo. Gov. Disses Nebraska, Colo. Basketball

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon says the Big 12 will be a stronger basketball conference without Colorado and Nebraska.

Nixon on Tuesday called the departing universities "the two weakest basketball programs" in the Big 12. Colorado is leaving for the Pac-10 while Nebraska is joining the Big Ten.

The Missouri governor says the remaining Big 12 schools could have a better shot of making the NCAA basketball tournament. He said poor win-loss records and weaker schedules by Nebraska and Colorado were dragging down the rankings of other Big 12 schools.

Nixon said of their departure: "I think it makes the basketball league stronger."

Last December, Nixon suggested Missouri should consider joining the Big Ten because it had stronger academics than some Big 12 schools. But that invitation never came.

Iowa Republican: Obama Favors Blacks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats on Tuesday denounced an Iowa Republican congressman who says President Barack Obama favors blacks over whites, and a GOP candidate from Colorado canceled a fundraiser the Iowan was to keynote.

Rep. Steve King, known for sometimes incendiary remarks about immigration, Abu Ghraib and other issues, criticized Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder, who also is black, in an interview Monday on G. Gordon Liddy's nationally syndicated radio talk show.

"I'm offended by Eric Holder and the president also, their posture," said King, 61. "It looks like Eric Holder said that white people in America are cowards when it comes to race."

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HYPERION

Parts Of Permit To Be Reviewed

BY WAYNE ORTMAN
Associated Press Writer

PIERRE — A judge on Tuesday granted a request from Hyperion Resources to have a state board reopen the permitting process for a \$10 billion oil refinery the company wants to build in southeast South Dakota.

The state Board of Minerals and Environment granted an air quality permit for the project last August. The Sierra Club and two local groups filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn the permit on the grounds that it does not address some environmental issues.

Hyperion said it needs to delay the start of construction while the appeal is pending and wants the state board to consider new rules implemented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency since the permit was granted.

Robert Graham, a lawyer for the opponents, asked Circuit Judge Mark Barnett to vacate the

entire permit. Graham said the fact Hyperion wants to reopen the process is an acknowledgment that the permit is flawed.

Hyperion attorney Rick Addison said that's not the case and that the company wants to make sure it's meeting all compliance standards with a state-of-the-art refinery.

"We haven't admitted anything is wrong with our permit," Addison said. "We could start construction now with the permit we have."

Barnett refused to set a deadline for the board to complete its review of new evidence and said it has the latitude to hear arguments brought by project opponents. He surmised, though, that the board would not take up issues covered in a previous hearing process spread over several months.

The permit granted to Hyperion requires it to begin construction within 18 months — by February 2011 — but the court appeal will delay that.

Because the permit is now in the courts, the

state cannot grant an extension on the start of construction, Deputy Attorney General Roxanne Giedd told Barnett.

The state supported Hyperion's request to reopen the process so an 18-month extension could be part of the board's review, she said.

The refinery would be located on 3,800 acres north of Elk Point. It would process 400,000 barrels of Canadian tar sands crude oil each day into low-sulfur gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and liquid petroleum gas.

Specific items the board is expected to consider in its review are new EPA rules regarding emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and those from a process to turn a refinery byproduct into electricity; proposed new EPA rules on greenhouse gas emissions; so-called Best Available Control Technologies, and a delayed start to construction.

Reopening the permitting process will put the court challenge on hold. A hearing in the case had been scheduled for June 23.

COUNTY

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really caused me some thought over the last 10 days or so."

The recent negative input heard by Sinclair, a long-time supporter of the project, has not been heard by other commissioners.

"I go to all the coffee groups. I get out a lot," Commission Chairman Bruce Jensen said. "I have not had one negative on this building."

Commissioner Bill Tamisiea added, "Most of the comments I hear are, 'It's about time you look at it.'"

Many people want better service from the department, Commissioner Donna Freng said. A

new facility will make that possible by providing indoor storage for vehicles so they start when temperatures are frigid.

"They want those plows out there earlier," she said. "That means they've got to be inside and ready to go."

The proposed 24,000-square-foot facility would be located on land the county owns about a mile west of Highway 81 along Highway 50. It would replace the 70-year-old facility located just west of Broadway at 407 West 11th Street.

Erickson presented an estimate of \$1.8 million Tuesday to build the new shop, slightly above the \$1.3 million to \$1.5 million price tag the commission had anticipated.

Jensen said Tuesday's conversation about whether or not support exists for the project should have been had before the planning stages had come so far.

The commission resolved to proceed with getting the finished plans for the project.

"We'll never know if we're missing an opportunity unless we put this out to bid," Freng added.

"That doesn't mean we have to build it. Let's find out what the market is."

Along with reviewing plans for the facility, the commission will discuss financing options for the project. The most promising avenue appears to be a lease buy-back where the county would borrow money from a lending institution and pay it back over time without raising taxes.

"We need to at least establish what kind of financing we're going to have with this, what it's going to cost and whether we can afford it without any increase in taxes," Tamisiea said.

"That's the critical issue right there," Sinclair responded. "As

soon as you tell somebody their taxes are going up, they go, 'No.'" In other business Tuesday, the commission:

- was told by Pete Johnson of Johnson Engineering that he hopes the recreational trail along Deer Boulevard can be bid out by July and work begun by September. He suggested a substantial completion date for the project be set for June 15, 2011;

- received information about plans to do maintenance painting on the four James River bridge crossings in the county; and

- was told about continuing problems with water leaking into the Yankton County Government Center after significant storms. Various attempts to resolve the issues have been unsuccessful, and the commission expressed frustration with the situation.

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