

Ameren plans state's largest wind farm in Northeast Missouri



By Ashley Szatala Herald-Whig

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Ameren Missouri announced plans Monday for a 400-megawatt wind farm in rural Adair and Schuyler counties that would create enough power to serve 120,000 homes within two years.

The St. Louis-based utility said in a statement that the company will lease land from farmers to put up wind turbines and that the wind farm will be spread over about 70,000 acres, which would make it the largest in the state.

Ameren credits the Mark Twain Transmission Project, approved in January by the Missouri Public Service Commission, with making the wind farm possible.

State Rep. Craig Redmon, R-Canton, and state Sen. Brian Munzlinger, R-Williamstown, both of whom represent Adair and Schuyler counties, called the announcement a "big win" for Northeast Missouri.

"Brian and I fought for this transmission line," Redmon said. "We knew that this (wind farm) is something that was always in play (if the transmission line was approved), but we didn't want to make it the focus. It was just one of the many positives of the transmission line. This wind farm is a great project, and it's something to be excited about in Northeast Missouri."

Munzlinger agreed.

"This couldn't have happened without the line, and I'm glad to see the idea for this wind farm come to fruition," he said. "Wind is an alternative source of energy that doesn't use precious natural resources like coal, so this great."

Initially, the 100-mile Mark Twain Transmission Project, proposed by Ameren Transmission Co. of Illinois, failed to get approval in Marion, Knox, Shelby, Adair and Schuyler counties because of fierce opposition by landowners who didn't want a new power line running across their properties.

However, ATXI proposed a different route for the line that would follow the rights of way of existing power lines. The new route would bypass Shelby County altogether and instead take in a small portion of Lewis County. The move was met with general approval by landowners, and the five county commissions eventually gave their assent to the new route.



The Mark Twain Transmission Project line runs from Palmyra to Kirksville, then north to the Iowa border, and has a targeted in-service date of December 2019, Ameren said in its statement, and groundbreaking for the wind farm is expected in summer 2019, pending Missouri Public Service Commission approval.

About 175 American-made wind turbines, standing more than 450 feet above the ground, are expected to be operational in 2020, the company said, adding that the turbines will be among the most technologically advanced in the state.

Ameren expressed interest in expanding its wind farm in the future, and Redmon and Munzlinger said they hope to see the wind farm expand along the transmission line into Knox and Marion counties.

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Nan Swanson

While the rest of rural America is fighting off industrial wind and their thousands of miles of excess transmission lines NE Missouri is excited? I truly doubt it. While lawmakers are excited by the tax revenue (generated by Production Tax Credits) according to many communities only 5-10% of the people who sign up for a wind turbine will live next to a wind turbine. There are many negative impacts of Industrial Wind that most people do not know. See the Coalition for Rural Property Rights or National Wind Watch or the Preservation of Rural Iowa Alliance or Missouri's own Concerned Citizens for the Future of Clinton and DeKalb Counties. After seeing what happened with the wind installation in DeKalb, Clinton County hired lawyers to bring in expert witnesses to defend their community from Industrial Wind's NextEra. NextEra lost and is now suing the County.

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Mike Schuttler

I hope you are successful and It generates a lot of power and cuts the cost for customers. Wind & Water are powerful tools for the future of energy.

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