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Wyoming's wind power turns EWEB's turbines

EWEB already has 2,220 customers signed up for its wind power program and is looking to expand enrollment

Lindsay Sauvé
Family/Health/Education Reporter

Being environmentally conscious is not just about sorting bottles and cans anymore; it's about power. People concerned about clean water, air and land are making a full rotation in the way they think about energy. And they don't have to look much further than their local utility board to find alternative methods.

In 1999, Eugene Water and Electric Board purchased 21 percent of the Foote Creek Rim wind project in southeast Wyoming and has since been offering customers the opportunity to receive a portion of their energy from wind power.

The Wyoming site has 69 wind turbines on 2,000 acres and is capable of producing 41.4 megawatts of electricity, which is enough power to run 10,000 homes. EWEB receives 8.78 megawatts of

that power.

EWEB spokesman Lance Robertson said about 2,200 residents and businesses participate in the wind power program, or 3 percent of users. This rate puts EWEB in the nation's top 10 utility companies who offer alternative energy sources.

Consumers can choose to purchase 10, 25, 50 or 100 percent wind power. The rate for non-wind power is 3.13 cents per kilowatt hour while wind power costs users 5.27 cents.

Robertson said the cost for using 10 percent wind is small, about \$2 more per month during the winter for single family homes. He added about 200 consumers use 100 percent wind power. The cost for using all wind is about \$17 extra per month.

"Lately we've been trying to reach out to more commercial businesses to try to get them involved in the wind program," Robertson said.

Dan Beilock at Red Barn Natural Foods said his company has been a part of the wind program since it began in 1999. In 2002, Red Barn used 13,000 kilowatt hours of wind power. He said the extra cost is a small price to pay for contributing to the greater good.

"We use wind power because we think it's important to contribute to self-sustained sources of energy," Beilock said.

Students can also feel good about the food they eat at the EMU's Holy Cow Café. Owner Kathee Lavine said one-third of their main kitchen, where they prepare all the food that's sold at the EMU site, is powered by the EWEB wind program. Holy Cow has also been hooked up since the program began.

"We did it because it seemed



EWEB purchased 21 percent of the Foote Creek Rim wind project in Wyoming, which has 69 wind turbines on 2,000 acres. Courtesy

like a step in the right direction," Lavine said.

University physics Professor Stanley Micklavzina, who teaches a course about renewable energy, said traditional methods of creating fuel contribute heavily to the pollution of the environment. Burning coal or other fossil fuels is one of the biggest causes of air pollution.

"Lately we've been trying to reach out to more commercial businesses to try to get them involved in the wind program"

Lance Robertson
EWEB spokesman

Another common method is hydro-electric, or dam-powered energy, which Micklavzina said can interrupt natural ecosystems. Wind power, on the other hand, produces no emissions or by-products.

Residents or business owners willing to pay a little extra every month to participate in the wind program can contact EWEB at 484-2411.

Contact the reporter at lindsaysauve@dailyemerald.com.

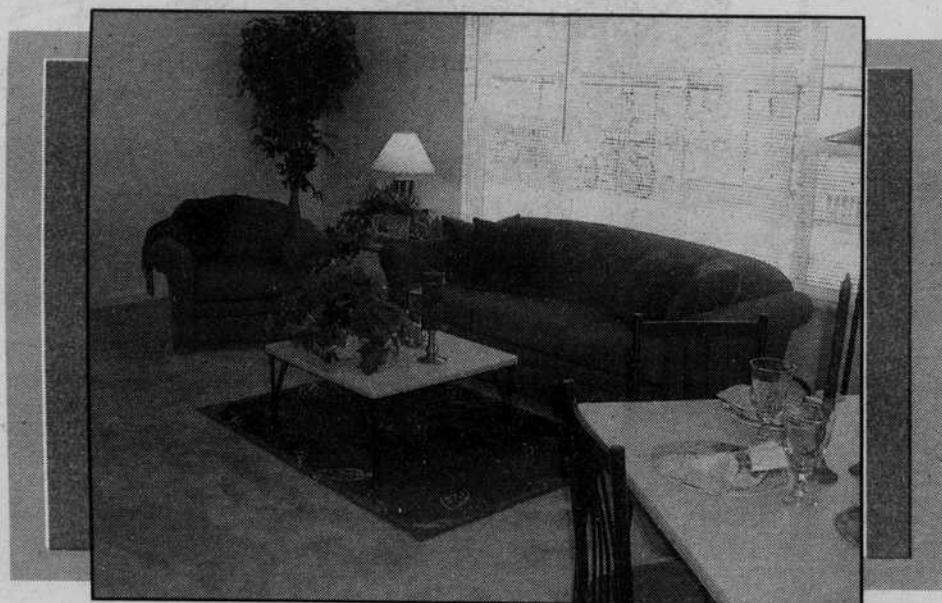
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