



Matanuska-Susitna
Borough School District

MSBSD NEWS

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"...developing citizens for a global society by inspiring students to think, learn, achieve, and care."

Sherrod Elementary--Wind for Schools

PALMER, AK--Last Thursday, the City of Palmer Planning and Zoning Committee gave the green light for a green energy project at Sherrod Elementary School. The Palmer school will be the first host of a wind turbine in Palmer and the first school in Alaska participating in the U.S. Department of Energy's *Wind for Schools* Program. Once all of the permits and conditions are met, Sherrod Principal Mark Hoffman hopes to see the wind generator installed this fall.

Garnering support from a wide sweep of Borough businesses, residents, and government agencies, the SkyStream® turbine, planned for installation on a monopole tower, will be located toward the southwest portion of the Sherrod Elementary property--about 100 feet away from the school. Requiring some 13 yards of concrete, the turbine will be self-supporting, without the need of guy-wires. The Palmer Rotary Club is funding the foundation concrete pad.



**Sherrod Principal,
Mark Hoffman**

According to the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the sound pressure level generated by a small wind generator is in the range of 40-65 decibels, which is quieter than background noise in a home or office.

In describing the project, Chris Rose, REAP (Renewable Energy Alaska Project) Executive Director, says, "There will only be one chance to have the first school-sited wind turbine in Alaska and it would be great to have it in Palmer." **Its purpose is primarily education, and the school will be teaching a curriculum designed to help children understand how wind energy works. Among those most excited about the project is Sherrod fifth grade teacher, Sean Williams. Mr. Williams explains that the wind generator will provide students with a way to explore basic ideas such as, "Where does energy come from?"** Knowing that energy comes from multiple sources, "It is right there, showing on the meter. It is generated and transferrable. Students can learn about how energy is used to power everyday things like electric light bulbs. The wind turbine provides the energy using the wind."



Sherrod Fifth-grade teacher, Sean Williams

Also in support of the Sherrod project is the Alaska Center for Energy and Power, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Director Gwen Holdmann says, "This is an exciting opportunity for Palmer residents and students as well as for the University of Alaska." The model put forth in the *Wind for Schools* Program helps students develop a knowledge base and skill set in science and energy. Holdmann continues by explaining that the model "supports workforce development and community involvement for students in elementary school through college."

Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is also partnering with the School District in providing support for the wind project. "MEA has several customers that are successfully interconnected with small wind turbine generators similar to the unit that is being installed at the Sherrod school site," said Interim General Manager, Joe Griffith. "As a demonstration of MEA's support for this project, MEA offers to provide in-kind labor and equipment necessary to erect the generator support structure, as well as install the trench and necessary back-fill for the conduit connection between the structure and the school building."



Common questions about the SkyStream® were asked at the Planning and Zoning Committee meeting, such as “Does it create any sound or interfere with TV reception?” Southwest Windpower, Inc., addresses these and other questions from homeowners and residents about how such a new technology will affect their community.

Answers to Common Questions...

- *Sound* -- The sound from small wind generators typically blends in with common outside sounds like those from cars, airplanes, barking dog, and wind blowing through the trees.
- *Visual Impact* -- The towers for small wind generators don't look much different than a common light pole or radio tower.
- *Structure Safety and Climbing Hazard* -- Wind generator towers must meet local building and safety requirements. Many towers have a smooth surface, like a light pole, that is nearly impossible to climb.
- *Interference* -- Small wind generators have no effect on TV or communications signals, as their blades are made from materials (wood, fiberglass, and plastic) that signals can pass through.
- *Property Values* -- There are as many as 20,000 small wind generators installed every year and to do, there has been no documented evidence that they have ever lowered property values.



Photo--NREL at www.nrel.gov.



Dedication of the Americas Wind Energy wind turbine, Wray School District RD-2, Wray, Colorado, February 2008

Wind for Schools Project:

The U.S. Department of Energy reports that the Wind for Schools Project provides students and teachers with a physical example of how communities can take part in providing for the economic and environmental security of the nation while allowing exciting, hands-on educational opportunities. “Energy is largely taken for granted within our society, but that perception is changing.”

Thanks for the support of the Sherrod Wind Project:



MSBSD Superintendent, George Troxel



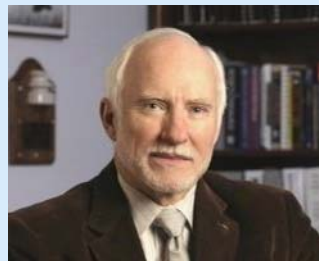
MSB Manager, John Duffy



REAP Executive Director, Chris Rose



MEA Board Member, Business Owner, Janet Kincaid



MEA Interim General Manager, Joe Griffith



Director Alaska Center for Energy and Power UAF, Gwen Holdmann



NREL National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Innovation for Our Energy Future

NREL Senior Project Leader/Alaska, Brian Hirsch, Ph.D.



City of Palmer, Dawn Webster



John Harris, Mat-Su Borough

Palmer Rotary Club



Rotary District 5010
"Rotary at the Top of the World"

Alaska
Eastern Russia
Yukon