

## Spanish Fork wind farm closer to reality

NATALIE ANDREWS - Daily Herald  
Wednesday, October 11, 2006

There is wind in the hills of Spanish Fork Canyon, but harnessing it for power and money hasn't been easy.

To bring the Wasatch Wind farm to fruition, Spanish Fork may have to give up some of the property tax dollars that made the project attractive to the city, even if the Legislature approves wind renewable energy tax credits next year. Legislators didn't reauthorize the credits during the 2006 legislative session, and the company was counting on them.

Under the proposal, the city's Redevelopment Agency would designate the wind farm a community development area, which means the company wouldn't pay full property for a period of years. The number of years hasn't yet been decided.

"If they go through the economic development area or redevelopment area, then part of the taxes would go back to the project, and the city would have to be willing to do that," City Manager Dave Oyler said.

Money is tight for Wasatch Wind because it won't be profitable without the tax credits. The renewable energy tax credits would have allowed the company to sell its tax credits to businesses with high taxes, covering high construction and employment costs. The wind farm has already cost several million dollars and while maintenance costs will be minimal once built, said Wasatch Wind President Tracy Livingston, it's still looking for reimbursement for startup costs.

"We just asked for a resolution by the Spanish Fork City Council to review if there was a community development option available that would benefit all parties involved with those who would receive benefits from property tax," Livingston said.

The nine windmills are already ordered, and four will sit on land owned by Spanish Fork and leased to the company, bringing the city close to a half a million dollars over 20 years. That lease revenue, said Assistant City Manager Seth Perrins, wouldn't change under the CDA proposal.

What would change is profit from property taxes. If the area became a CDA, the city would collect less in taxes, though Perrins said the city would still collect some tax dollars from what would otherwise be vacant land.

In November, the city will have a final number on how much it would give up in property taxes under the CDA, and then the RDA board will vote on the proposal, which could be before the Legislature convenes for the 2007 session.

Sara Baldwin, community relations coordinator for Utah Clean Energy, said she was working with several organizations and legislators to approve the tax credit bill.

"Right now our intent is to rewrite it as it was authorized," Baldwin said. "It's a huge incentive to bring more business to Utah."

Natalie Andrews is available at 344-2561 or [nandrews@heraldextra.com](mailto:nandrews@heraldextra.com).  
This story appeared in The Daily Herald on page D3.