



Opportunities Abound for Jackson County Minnesota

Cheryl Glaeser • Feb. 22, 2018

We've probably all heard about the wind energy benefit of production tax payments for Minnesota - \$12.07 million in to Minnesota counties and townships in 2017 - and how these funds are used to stabilize or reduce local taxes and improve roads. But there is so much more to the benefits of wind. This became even more evident for me as I attended a meeting hosted by [EDF Renewable Energy](#) for the Oza Tonka Wind Project in Faribault County. To help area landowners understand the potential opportunity, folks from Jackson County Minnesota attended the event and shared their personal experiences with wind energy. Jackson County has received an average of \$1.6 million per year in tax revenue from wind energy since 2012. They currently host about 600 MW of wind energy and use the tax revenue to relieve tax burdens for local residents and support capital improvements.

But tax revenue isn't the only benefit for rural communities. Technicians and the Site Manager of the [Lakefield Wind Project](#) near Lakefield, Minnesota, shared their stories of acquiring well-paying jobs (Minnesota Wind Energy Technicians' Median Wage is \$26/hour) near their rural home towns. Lakefield Wind employs 12 people. As Josh Zeitz, site manager of the Lakefield Wind Project said, "I am so fortunate to be able to live close to family and come back to my rural community."

And that's not all. Dave Hanson, a landowner near Lakefield hosts 3 turbines on his property. Dave referred to his wind turbines as his retirement plan, "Wind energy is helping me pass our fourth-generation farm to our son. I've been nothing but happy with my turbines and the whole process."

There can be even more community benefit. The [Odell Wind Farm](#) developed by Geronimo Energy and owned by Algonquin Power & Utilities Corporation touches Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin and Watonwan Counties. The Odell Wind Farm provides a unique opportunity for area communities through the [Odell Wind Farm Community Fund](#), which will receive annual monetary contributions from the project for charitable community projects and opportunities. The Fund's board of directors [recently awarded \\$39,000](#) for Chromebooks at schools and funding for a local library, fire departments, ambulance services, 4-H, FFA, robotics, and more.

For rural counties with an average population of 13,000 for each county, stories like this show the true benefits of wind!

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