



Association of Illinois
Electric Cooperatives



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 24, 2011

Illinois Electric Cooperatives To Purchase 40 Megawatts of Wind Power

PAXTON – Today, three generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, serving 21 Illinois electric cooperatives and their 540,000 members, announced that they will be purchasing 40 megawatts of wind energy from the Pioneer Trail Wind Farm.

The wind farm is being developed east of Paxton, Ill. The three member-owned G&Ts, Prairie Power, Inc., Southern Illinois Power Cooperative and Wabash Valley Power Association are entering into an 18-year power purchase agreement with Pioneer Trail Wind Farm, LLC, an affiliate of E.ON Climate & Renewables North America (EC&RNA). The agreement was coordinated through the National Renewables Cooperative Organization, which was formed to promote and facilitate the development of economically viable renewable energy resources for its member cooperatives across the United States.

Duane Noland, president/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, said the purchase agreement illustrates the ongoing effort of Illinois electric co-ops to provide affordable and reliable energy to electric co-op members, and support innovative energy efficiency and clean renewable energy projects such as the Pioneer Trail Wind Farm. Noland said the agreement also helps the 21 electric distribution co-ops across the state that receive wholesale power from the three G&Ts by keeping rates affordable and diversifying the power supply. *“Cooperatives also live by a principle of commitment to community and we know that this project will produce not only affordable energy, but also jobs and new revenue for the area.”*

“Our Pioneer Trail Wind Farm is expected to provide clean power to approximately 45,000 households in the central Illinois region using North American made turbines, blades and towers,” said Steve Trenholm, CEO, EC&RNA. *“Locally, this project projects to spend more than \$29 million dollars in local taxes, paying \$8 million in local salaries and more than \$50 million to landowners. We expect to employ about 200 people during construction and also expect to establish 8 to 10 permanent positions for the life of the wind farm.”*

David Champion, Jr., president/CEO of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative headquartered in Paxton, said that this purchase agreement demonstrates that the Illinois electric co-ops are not only working to keep bills affordable through innovative energy efficiency programs, but also looking for affordable power supply options. Champion said, *“Our power supplier, Prairie Power Inc, has been searching for commercially available, viable, renewable projects as a potential resource for some time. They had found that*

most of the alternatives were priced higher than our current and projected cost of power. By remaining diligent in the search, they found a project that is both good for the environment and cost effective for our members. Our participation in this project is made possible by the competitive pricing in this new contract.”

Jay Bartlett, president/CEO of Prairie Power, said the state’s cooperatives have taken a conservative but long term approach to renewable energy. He said, *“The cooperatives are purchasing both the energy and renewable energy credits (RECs) produced by this project over a long period of time. This provides renewable energy system developers like E.ON with a steady source of revenue to finance the construction of additional renewable energy projects in Illinois. We believe this is very good for our co-op members, the environment, and wind energy development in Illinois. We are looking for cost effective projects, like the Pioneer Trail Wind Farm, that ensure positive long term environmental and economic benefits, and assist us in maintaining affordable and stable rates.”*

Scott Ramsey, president/CEO of Southern Illinois Power Cooperative, said the G&T was one of the founding members of the National Renewables Cooperative Organization and has been looking for several years for the right partner and the right renewable energy contract. *“E.ON is a solid and reputable company that has global wind energy development and operational experience. They were in a position to offer us a competitively priced renewable energy contract. After doing the necessary due diligence we determined that now is the time and this is the contract that we have been looking for.”*

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About the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives

Based in Springfield, the AIEC provides legal, engineering, communications, safety training, legislative and other services to 25 electric distribution cooperatives and four generation and transmission cooperatives. AIEC member cooperatives serve more than 279,334 farms, homes and businesses in 90 counties, with 55,592 miles of line. Contact: Duane Noland, 217-529-5561, dnoland@aiec.coop. www.aiec.coop

About Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative is a member-owned rural electric cooperative based in Paxton, Ill. that supplies electricity to approximately 13,731 meters over 4,522 miles of line in parts of Champaign, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, McLain, Moultrie, Piatt and Vermilion Counties. Eastern Illini Electric is a member of Touchstone Energy®— an alliance of more than 720 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country.

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About Prairie Power, Inc.

Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI) is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric generation and transmission cooperative, which produces and supplies wholesale electricity to 10 electric distribution cooperatives in central Illinois. PPI’s distribution cooperatives

provide retail electric service to approximately 78,000 homes, farms, businesses and industries within their local service territories.

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About Southern Illinois Power Cooperative

Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric generation and transmission cooperative serving seven distribution cooperatives and two municipals in southern Illinois. SIPC's distribution cooperatives provide retail electric service to approximately 82,000 homes, farms, businesses and industries in 29 counties.

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About Wabash Valley Power Association

Wabash Valley Power Association (WVPA) is a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative based in Indianapolis. The G&T provides wholesale electricity to 28 distribution systems in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Ohio. Collectively, these distribution cooperatives supply electricity to more than 380,000 homes, farms, businesses and industries.

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About the National Renewables Cooperative Organization

Cooperatives across the country formed the National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO) to promote and facilitate the development of renewable energy resources for its members. NRCO's main purposes are to facilitate the cost-effective, joint development of renewable resources nationwide for its cooperative owners.

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About EC&R

E.ON Climate & Renewables (EC&R) is responsible for the E.ON group's renewable energy and environmental protection activities around the world. Tapping renewable energy sources offers enormous alternatives, both from a business perspective and for the environment. E.ON Climate & Renewables will be investing €4 billion in renewable energy and environmental protection projects from 2010 - 2013 to expand the share of renewable energy in E.ON's portfolio for the long term. E.ON has thus taken a leading role in developing renewable energy sources worldwide.

E.ON Climate & Renewables North America is one of EC&R's six regional business units and is headquartered in Chicago, Ill. E.ON AG is one of the world's largest energy companies and the largest investor owned utility in the world. For more information, please visit www.eon.com/renewables.

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