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Beech Ridge opens wind farm field office

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RUPERT, WV — Beech Ridge Energy, which plans to develop a \$300 million wind farm in Greenbrier County, opened a field office here Monday which initially will employ two people.

Local politicians and citizens supporting the project gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the 186-megawatt wind energy project slated to build 124-wind turbines in north-central Greenbrier County.

“While this is just a small office, hopefully in a year’s time there will be 200 West Virginia union members helping build the turbines,” Dave Groberg, director of business development for Invenergy, the Chicago-based company developing the wind farm, said. “We are busy enough right now that we need this office.”

Groberg said two employees will be working on “ongoing geo-technical studies” related to the wind farm and will be able answer people’s questions about the project. The new office is located at 211 Nicholas St.

“This signifies an important step in the life of this project,” Groberg said. “We have been at work in the community for some time, but now we have a visible presence demonstrating that we intend to be good, local citizens.”

Rupert Mayor Charles Mundy and Wayne Rebich, a representative of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation of Beckley, also attended the event along with about 30 others.

“We welcome Beech Ridge as Rupert’s newest corporate citizen,” Mundy said. “We look forward to the company’s continued presence and to the jobs the wind farm will create in our community.”

Beech Ridge officials have consistently said the project will create 200 temporary jobs during the six- to eight-month construction phase and 20 permanent jobs upon its completion.

Rebich applauded Beech Ridge's efforts to keep jobs within West Virginia's unions.

During the ceremony, Groberg also donated a check on the behalf of Beech Ridge to the Greenbrier County Animal Shelter. He also pledged \$1,000 each to both high schools in the county to help pay for items destroyed by vandalism.

Currently the Public Service Commission is reviewing a siting application for Beech Ridge Energy. Public hearings are scheduled on the matter in Greenbrier County April 25 and in Charleston May 10-12. A decision by the PSC could come as soon as Aug. 28.

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