

## Report: Oklahoma among top states adding wind capacity

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The Blue Canyon wind farm, operated by Tulsa-based Public Service Company of Oklahoma, is north of Lawton. (Courtesy photo)

TULSA – Oklahoma ranked third highest in adding wind capacity in the most recent quarter, according to the American Wind Energy Association's report issued on Tuesday.

Oklahoma added 130 megawatts during the three-month period of July, August and September, the AWEA reported. It followed Colorado, which installed the most wind capacity with 501 MW; then Minnesota, with 163 MW. West Virginia followed Oklahoma with 98 MW. Texas rounded out the top five states with 88 MW.

Oklahoma did quite well in the AWEA's third-quarter report, said Kylah McNabb, program manager and wind development specialist at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

An Alabama Power project, which involves Oklahoma wind power being sold to the Southeast, is expected to put Oklahoma in the national spotlight for wind production, McNabb said.

"It will demonstrate our ability to provide economical power to customers in a different region of the country," McNabb said.

Also, more than 700 MW of wind capacity is under construction in Oklahoma and Iowa, according to the report. Significant under-construction numbers were reported in California, which has more than 1,200 MW under construction, and Oregon, with 800 MW. There is more than 600 MW under construction in Illinois, Kansas and Washington state.

"For the potential going forward, DOE's 20 percent by 2030 report gives indications that Oklahoma could have 38,000 megawatts of wind production," McNabb said. "We still have a great deal of wind power ready to produce."

Quarter after quarter, the strong under-construction figures and new construction starts continue to show the agility and productivity of the industry to respond to positive market and policy signals, said Liz Salerno, senior director of industry data and analysis for the AWEA.

"The ability of the wind project developers to quickly ramp up and deliver projects as utilities increasingly recognize the affordable costs of wind is a clear sign of the effectiveness of policies," Salerno said. "The increased activity, particularly from utilities that traditionally don't produce wind energy, is a welcomed change for the industry, which is looking to secure long-term contracts to deliver power."

At the same time, there are no projects scheduled for 2013, which threatens development companies and the U.S. wind energy supply chain, Salerno said.

"While the imposed uncertainty of an expiring project causes fewer projects to be scheduled for 2013, developers in the wind industry are nimble and have faced expirations in the past," Salerno said.

However, the other half of the industry, manufacturing, is more established in the U.S. and has not gone through multiple cycles of expirations.

In just five years, while the industry was growing at a rapid clip, the domestic content of U.S.-produced turbines increased from less than 25 percent to 60 percent, Salerno said.

"The manufacturing sector requires a long lead time and horizon to make large investments in American manufacturing infrastructure," Salerno said. "Without certainty in 2013 and beyond, there is a major risk of losing some of the manufacturing capabilities we've already established as well as deterring any new manufacturing that is looking to set up shop in America, sending investment dollars in the wrong direction."

The AWEA said in its report that wind energy is more affordable than ever, and new installations across the country are saving consumers money on their electric bills, as utilities rush to lock in long-term favorable rates.

"This is what a successful business looks like with stable tax policy. Utilities are locking in a great deal for their electric customers while it's available. We're keeping rates down all across the U.S., even in the heart of the South," said Denise Bode, CEO of the AWEA, in a statement. Bode pointed to recent wind power purchases by the Southern Company in Alabama, Austin Energy in Texas, and Xcel in Colorado as examples.

The report said the U.S. wind industry installed more than 1,200 megawatts in the third quarter and about 3,360 megawatts on the year so far. There is more than 8,400 megawatts under construction – that is more than in any quarter since 2008. The federal production tax credit has driven as much as \$20 billion a year in private investment, the AWEA said.

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