

Welcome to The Spectrum, St. George, UT

Customer Service: [Subscribe Now](#) | [Place an Ad](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Make TheSpectrum.com my Home Page](#)

[thespectrum.com](#) [Weather](#) [Jobs](#) [Cars](#) [Real Estate](#) [Apartments](#) [Shopping](#) [Classifieds](#) [Dating](#)



Search St. George:

Thursday, April 10, 2008

- ▶ Home
- ▶ News
- Local News
- Archives
- Obituaries
- Local Sports
- Outdoors
- Business
- Southern Utah Life
- Celebrations
- Opinion
- Video
- Nation/World
- Forums
- Movie Listings
- Travel
- Technology
- Special Sections
- Weather
- ▶ RSS Feeds
- ▶ St. George Magazine
- ▶ DVTnv.com
- ▶ Entertainment
- ▶ Communities
- ▶ Customer Service

Email Newsletter

SOUTHWEST APPLIED TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE
435-586-2899

GREAT COLLEGE

Click Here For Job Skills Training!

NO PARKING FEES

School plugs into unused power source

DAVID DEMILLE
ddemille@thespectrum.com

ENOCH - Starting this fall, a group of unlikely residents will take the lead in developing wind energy in the Cedar Valley - elementary school students.

Plans are under way to erect a wind generator at Three Peaks Elementary School, a tower between 33 and 70 feet tall that will produce enough energy to power a small home, that educators hope will help students become familiar with the age of renewable energies.

HIDDEN VALLEY

THE NEW VILLA & CASITA

MODEL HOMES ARE NOW OPEN

IVORY HOMES

(Brigham Road East #4, then right on Hidden Valley Dr., then left on Price Hills Dr.)

1-866-IVORY-4U

The Three Peaks project, scheduled to begin construction in August, is following in the footsteps of a success story in Milford, where a few wind towers and some industrious students and teachers have convinced commercial developers to take notice of the valuable resource.

Sometime this year, a developer is slated to start constructing a wind farm that will have some 80 turbines and produce more than 200 megawatts of power.

"It's a great opportunity," said Brad Vetsch, a junior at Milford

High School. He said the wind farm would provide many new jobs to the area, and with his experience on the school systems, he has the inside track on becoming a wind industry technician.

While the Cedar Valley receives slightly less wind than Milford, there is still plenty to use - about 13 mph winds on average - said Gerald Whipple, president of Solar Unlimited in Cedar City.

"People kind of complain about the wind blowing a lot, me included," he said. "But there's a lot of energy, too."

Organizers plan to use a new Skystream 3.7 generator at Three Peaks, which is rated to produce 1.8 kilowatts per hour.

The school will save money on its energy bill, and the students will learn concepts in math and science and other areas as they keep track of how much power the generator is producing, and how much money that power is worth.

"Science is not something that should just be in a textbook or on a test," said principal Tim Taylor. "Students get excited when they get to do something hands-on."

In addition, the project will engage students about relevant social issues because renewable energy has become such an important topic amid talk of pollution, rising fuel prices and energy dependence, said Clay Carter, the fourth-grade teacher expected to take the lead on the project at Three Peaks.

"It makes them more aware of energy," he said. "When they go home and turn the lights on, it means more to them."

The tower will be funded by a \$15,000 grant funded by Rocky Mountain Power, as well as Utah Clean Energy and Utah Clean Air, nonprofit outfits working to advance energy efficiency and renewable energy technology in Utah.



[Zoom Photo](#)



[Zoom Photo](#)



[Zoom Photo](#)

Sara Baldwin, community programs and policy associate at Utah Clean Energy, said Three Peaks was chosen largely because of the excitement and interest shown by its staff and administration.

"We've been looking for some champions to really take ownership of the project and see it through," she said.

Two more schools will be added onto the project in the near future, Baldwin said, although the schools have not yet been selected. She said a successful project at Three Peaks could push the concept forward throughout the region.

"Our hope is this provides a model for us to follow in the future," she said.

"It's a small amount of energy," she added. "However, it has enormous benefits to the kids."


The wind programs also can have tangible affects on the local community, such as in Milford, where the coming wind farm could have a huge impact on the economy.

Andy Swapp, who teaches the renewable energies class at MHS, said students like Vetsch will literally change the landscape of the area with their knowledge of wind systems.

"Guys like Brad are responsible for bringing the wind farm to the area," he said.

Swapp said wind is a virtually untapped resource that area developers could exploit, if they just take a cue from efforts like the wind system at Three Peaks.

"The resources are there, because the commercial developers are all around," he said. "It's there if we take advantage."

STORYCHAT  [Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

Comments by: **sis** Posted: Thu Apr 10, 2008 11:06 am
We had had a wind farm that gave our cows water. I have also been to Palm Springs, many times. Silly little invention.

Comments by: **pre** Posted: Thu Apr 10, 2008 10:01 am
Good job y'all. Get those young minds solving the problems we have instead of adding to them. I'm not a tree hugger but I definitely think this is a good thing. Hey, and Utahboyz and I actually agree on something. Amazing. haha.

Comments by: **ironmtnhank** Posted: Thu Apr 10, 2008 9:42 am
The great thing about wind generated electricity in Cedar City/Milford areas is that the wind kicks up right at peak hours for electricity about 2pm and quits at night.

Comments by: **Utopian** Posted: Thu Apr 10, 2008 9:10 am
This is a wonderful experience for kids, any exposure to science in a way that stimulates interest that kids can relate to is great.

As for the wind farm... I've never been to Milford nor am I familiar with the specific area to be developed for wind energy. I only know that the area is sparsely populated, which in the case of a windfarm, is a good thing. The windfarms in use in Altamont, CA have been very successful and are a moderately good use of the potential. They are situated on grazing, hilly grassland, ideal multi-use of the land.

However, windfarm acceptance in residential areas is quite different. Palm Springs, CA is probably the best example. The idea there was to use the energy on-site, local customers directly benefitting. Residents were skeptical, but agreed. The benefits never materialized. Since 1984 there have been countless lawsuits, hearings, negotiations, hard feelings and very high costs, among the highest in the nation. \$500/mo per home in summer is typical. Thousands of acres of land; flat, level, valuable land, was re-zoned WE (wind energy) and turbines were erected, away from residences initially. Then, as the limited partnerships became a more popular tax haven, developers began to push for closer encroachment. The 'safe' distance dropped from 1/2 mile to a few feet. Heights grew from 100 feet to 400 feet and the 'legal' noise levels increased proportionately. It quickly got out of control, property values of existing exposed homes plummeted as much as 80%. Tempers flared. The whole episode was for naught, for now a gas fired power plant is being planned for the center of the windfarm, residentsnow face the worst of both worlds.

Hurricane wanted to exploit their location and install a windfarm, but the wind was not consistant enough. Believe me, Hurricane dodged a bullet. Bottom line is, windfarms are great if not in or too near a residential area. Since they only need to be connected by wires (they need no water, gas lines or rail spurs), they only need to be where the wind blows - a lot. The largest drawback in the U.S. is that the energy is only produced when the wind blows.

But Japan (NGK Ceramics) has perfected a remarkable high density sodium-sulphur battery that can store the energy produced to be used as needed. That technology will inevitably find its way to the U.S. windfarms, like Altamont.

Comments by: **oldboy** Posted: Thu Apr 10, 2008 8:53 am
You mean, like...the noise disrupts Prairie Dog mating?

[Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

Originally published April 10, 2008

 Print this article  E-mail this to a friend  Subscribe Now



[Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Rights](#)
(Terms updated March 2007)

[Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Place an ad](#)
Copyright ©2008 The Spectrum.
All rights reserved.

