

A study conducted by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) reveals that wind development in Nebraska could create 20,600 to 36,500 short-term construction jobs between 2011 and 2020.

These wind farms are estimated to support 2,200 to 4,000 additional long-term operations and maintenance jobs.

Assuming development and operations over a 40-year period, the construction of 7800 megawatts is estimated to add \$7.8 billion to \$14.1 billion to Nebraska's economy.

Industry has already begun to develop. In Columbus, Neb., the wind tower manufacturer, Katana Summit, opened its doors in July and now employs over 100 workers full-time. The company represents a \$20 million dollar investment in the community.

Neighboring states like Iowa and Colorado have rapidly developed wind energy farms. In 2007, Iowa built 341 new megawatts and Colorado built 776 new megawatts of wind. Both of these states are currently producing more than 1,000 MW of electricity from wind.

Currently Nebraska produces 73 megawatts of electricity from wind power and by the end of 2009 that number will jump to 193 megawatts from the new wind produced near Bloomfield. The projects combined will produce affordable electricity for 38,000 Nebraska residences.

"We are sitting on a world-class resource that can help us create jobs, improve our economy and the environment in one fell swoop. Now is the time for Nebraska to go full-scale and harvest the wind," said Mary Harding, executive director of the Nebraska League of Conservation Voters.

Economic impacts are estimated with NREL's Jobs and Economic Development (JEDI) Wind model and include direct, indirect and induced impacts. Direct impacts accrue from expenditures in the wind industry. Indirect impacts accrue in supporting industries as a result of increased demand for basic goods and services.

Induced impacts result from reinvestment and spending by direct and indirect beneficiaries. In some cases, depending on the structure of the local economy, indirect and induced impacts may be greater than direct wind industry impacts.

The report can be accessed at <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy09osti/44344.pdf>.