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Newest Texas Wind Farm Cause for Community Celebration, Brings Energy Industry Leaders to Kenedy County on the Gulf Coast

SARITA, Texas – Texas leads the nation in producing the most renewable wind power, and the region's newest wind farm was cause for community-wide celebration in Kenedy County along the Gulf Coast today.

The Peñascal Wind Power Project will produce enough clean, renewable energy to power 70,000 homes in South Texas. The wind farm is also a model for responsible development with protections for migratory birds and minimal impact on a historic ranch teeming with wildlife.

Today's celebration was an international affair. Dozens of local school children and families joined energy industry leaders from the United States, Japan and Spain, as well as Texas elected officials, for a traditional chuckwagon supper and fish fry at the historic Kenedy Ranch Museum.

"The Peñascal Wind Power Project is a great example why Texas continues to be a leader in the world energy markets," said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. "Wind power isn't growing in Texas because it's an environmental fad; Texas leads the nation in wind power because it's making money, and I'm here to support that."

Peñascal encompasses 84 new Mitsubishi turbines that produce 202 megawatts of clean, renewable energy.

"The coastal wind that powers the Peñascal project is especially valuable. It blows during the late afternoon when electricity is needed most for air conditioning during the hottest hours of the day," said Barry Smitherman, Chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC). "The Peñascal Wind Project will help reduce wholesale electricity price spikes in South Texas and reinforces our state's position as the wind energy capital of North America."



Peñascal Wind Power Project

The power generated at Peñascal will be delivered to customers of CPS Energy of San Antonio and the South Texas Energy Cooperative.

"CPS Energy is committed to reaching its goal of meeting 20 percent of its peak demand with renewable energy by 2020, and that is only possible with great partnerships with companies like Iberdrola Renewables," said Richard Peña, Vice President of Fossil Generation for CPS Energy.

Both CPS Energy and the South Texas Energy Cooperative have 15-year agreements to purchase Peñascal's output.

The Peñascal wind project provided South Texas Electric Cooperative with a unique opportunity to participate in a renewable project with Iberdrola Renewables the largest and most experienced renewable energy company in the world. Iberdrola Renewables has earned the respect and admiration of the industry and makes the choice of a partner on future renewable projects an easy decision, South Texas Electric Cooperative said in a statement.

(more)

In addition to the production of renewable energy, Iberdrola Renewables developed Peñascal to avoid or minimize environmental impacts on birds, wildlife and wetlands.

“Before construction began, Iberdrola Renewables commissioned wildlife biologists who spent three years and more than 4,000 hours in the field, studying the site and avian patterns,” said Martin Mugica, Executive Vice President of Iberdrola Renewables. “Now we have acquired a state-of-the-art Merlin avian radar unit to detect major bird migration activity, and when high numbers of birds are present near the turbines under low visibility conditions, turbines will be shut down until those conditions pass. Information gleaned from the studies showed that by careful turbine placement and with the use of the avian radar system, Peñascal will have minimal impact on the environment and wildlife.”

The partnership with the landowner, The John G. Kenedy, Jr. Charitable Trust, was particularly important for the development of Peñascal.

The Trustees of the John G. Kenedy, Jr. Charitable Trust said in a statement: “The Penascal Wind Power Project will help ensure the stated purpose of Mrs. Elena Suess Kenedy, as expressed in her Last Will and Testament, to preserve the continued operations of the Kenedy Ranch for the benefit of future generations while also recognizing and protecting the environmental sensitivities of the area.”

Partnership for Science Education

As part of Iberdrola Renewables’ support for science education in the region, fifth-grade students at Sarita Elementary School recently spent the day building and testing miniature wind turbines supplied by the company. Iberdrola Renewables also has a long-term partnership with the school to support its new science lab.

In addition Iberdrola Renewables supported a similar wind turbine project with fathers and teens involved in the community organization FACE (Fathers Active in Communities & Education) of Alice, Texas. The program provides exposure to jobs in green energy and other industries.

Iberdrola Renewables is the world’s leading provider of wind power with 9,300 MW of wind power in operation globally now. www.iberdrolarenewables.us.

Contact:

Jan Johnson, Iberdrola Renewables, 503-796-7070, jan.johnson@iberdrolausa.com

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