

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2006

CONTACT: Teresa Galluzzo (319) 338-0773 or tgalluzzo@iowapolicyproject.org

Wind: Propelling Iowa Schools Into the Future

DES MOINES, Iowa (March 7) — Use of wind power is helping a handful of Iowa schools save money while teaching about the potential wind energy, an opportunity that could be expanded with further state incentives.

“Iowa’s schools face a perennial struggle with tight budgets. Their financial difficulties are worsened by rising prices for fossil fuels,” said Teresa Galluzzo, research associate for the Iowa Policy Project and co-author of a new report, *Wind Power and Iowa Schools*.

“The number of schools that have made this connection is small, but it’s growing” Galluzzo added. “Schools with wind turbines are cutting their costs while promoting energy independence and environmental responsibility. Plus, they are providing their students with the opportunity to understand the fastest growing energy source in the world.”

In the new report, Galluzzo and Executive Director David Osterberg profile the nine K-12 schools and one community college that operate wind turbines.

Iowa currently ranks third in the nation for megawatts installed, standing at more than 896 turbines producing 836 MW, and has long been a leader in educational achievement. Although school turbines account for only a small share of the wind power installed in Iowa (5.5 MW), the state is also a leader in the number of schools using the wind’s energy.

“The possibilities for more school-owned wind power are enormous in Iowa where there are already examples in place,” Osterberg said. “It is estimated that 40 percent of the state’s land has adequate wind speeds for wind power development.”

The 10 Iowa schools with turbines are saving or generating between \$3,500 and \$560,000 every year. (The amount varies by the local wind potential, the size of the turbine, and the utility agreement.) They are also realizing benefits other than lasting monetary returns. In every case, the school’s turbine has become a source of community pride. They have also provided an educational opportunity, helped schools reduce their environmental impact, and allowed schools to be model members of their community.

A bill in the Iowa Senate would increase the local, small-producer renewable energy production tax credit. The credit passed last year allowed for 90 MW of wind energy. These credits were claimed in less than two weeks. SF2325 would allow for another 90 MW.

Osterberg said, “Last year no schools were able to claim this credit. Perhaps we could carve out a specific portion for schools of all types, making sure that when people think of wind power, they think of schools.”

“School-owned wind power generation is a win-win-win situation: schools’ budgets are increased, students have the opportunity to study cutting-edge technology, and we reduce dependence on fossil fuels and the associated environmental impacts,” Galluzzo said.

The Iowa Policy Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization dedicated to promoting public policy that fosters economic opportunity while safeguarding the health and well-being of Iowa’s people and environment. IPP reports are available, free of charge, on the web at www.iowapolicyproject.org.

#