

Companies plan to build wind towers in Cheyenne

BEN NEARY - Associated Press - Associated Press

Two major companies have formed a joint venture to construct towers for wind turbines in Cheyenne, Gov. Matt Mead announced Tuesday.

Worthington Energy Group and Gestamp Renewables say they plan to build a \$40 million plant in Cheyenne to begin producing up to 300 towers per year by early 2012. Company officials say they intend to hire about 150 workers for the plant.

"The wonderful thing about this, and the wonderful thing about the location, is they are going to be a lighthouse, a magnet, for other manufacturing companies and other distribution companies to come to Wyoming," Mead said.

He said the companies decided to build in Cheyenne after sizing up Wyoming's pro-business environment.

"They saw that we'd done a manufacturing sales tax exemption," Mead said. "They saw that our treasurer had the ability to issue industrial bonds. They saw that Wyoming was willing to step up and provide a substantial amount of money for work force training. All of that was a part of our package."

Ralph Roberts, president of the Worthington Industries Inc.'s Global Group, said at a news conference that he and officials at Gestamp Corp. are pleased to come to Wyoming.

"We are excited to bring our company from the Midwest, specifically Ohio, and our Spanish partners from Europe together in Wyoming to build on the commitment of renewable energy by this state and this country," Roberts said.

Jon Riberas, president and CEO of Gestamp Renewables, issued a statement saying, "We have wind tower manufacturing facilities in Spain, Turkey and Brazil, and we are happy to be partnering with Worthington in our first North American facility."

The plant will be built at the Cheyenne Logistics Hub at Swan Ranch, a business development on the southwest side of Cheyenne that has rail and highway access.

Mead said the state will put up \$400,000 for job training. Roberts said the company intends to send Wyoming workers to Europe for instruction at plants that are now building the towers. The state is also backing the project with \$15 million in industrial revenue bonds.

Joe Resko, vice president of operations for Columbus, Ohio-based Worthington, said the steel towers will be built in sections up to 100 feet long. The heights of the completed towers, which can weigh up to 100 tons, vary according to the needs of specific projects.

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