



Wind & Water Power Program

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Native American Interview: Nicholas Goodman, TDX Power Corporation

Date: 3/31/2007

Location: AK

Tell us how TDX became interested in wind energy.

A. TDX's chairman, Ron Philemonoff, became interested in wind power during one of his annual trips to visit family in California. With all due respect to our brethren in California, the St. Paul Island wind resource has no equal in California, and he knew the technology had real potential on St. Paul Island. After extended exposure to Palm Springs wind farms, Ron and the TDX Board of Directors decided to invest in a turbine for the corporation's industrial complex on St. Paul Island.

Q. What are the lessons learned from St. Paul Phase 1?

A. Alaskan logistics are always difficult, the first 2 years are really difficult, and never let the Vestas mechanic check his tools as baggage! TDX experienced two major mechanical breakdowns in the first two years, when the gearbox failed due to inadequate design for cold temperatures. On one of these occasions, Vestas sent a mechanic from Portland. When he got off the plane, he soon learned that his tools, which he checked as baggage, had been bumped and would not show up for several days on the bypass mail freight plane because of our location.

Tell us about St. Paul Phase 2.

A. After several years of smooth operations and demonstrated savings, TDX decided to invest in an expansion to the wind plant to support economic development on the island through low-cost energy and to generate enough power for residential consumption.

Q. What is TDX' vision for St. Paul wind in the long term?

A. TDX hopes to further expand the wind farm to ensure all energy consumption on the island is supplied with wind power when the resources are available.

Q. TDX has been pursuing some other wind-diesel projects. Can you tell us about them?

A. TDX Power is building a 1-MW wind farm in Sand Point, Alaska, with 50% project funding support from the Alaska Energy Agency. This will make Sand Point the largest high-penetration project in Alaska, and we believe it will reduce diesel consumption by 140,000 gallons per year. TDX Power also recently won a competitive solicitation with the U.S. Air Force to develop a high-penetration project at Tin City, a long-range radar site in northwest Alaska. The project will experience unprecedented rime ice, and TDX Power will deploy a new heating package on a remanufactured Vestas V27 wind turbine. Lastly, TDX Power will develop a small wind project in Nikolski, a small community at the end of the Aleutian Peninsula.

Q. What makes a good wind-diesel opportunity?

A. A good wind resource, high fuel prices, and a community that wants to support such a wind project.

Q. What are the remaining challenges for wind-diesel to be a mainstream solution for Alaska villages?

A. Wind turbine pricing and availability are the major hurdles in Alaska. Knowledgeable developers and vendors, and a lack of many integration and controls options are also significant challenges.

Q. What role can the state and federal governments play in addressing these challenges?

A. Continued financial support to address the high cost of equipment and remote site costs will be critical.

Name one thing that TDX would like to change to have the greatest impact on wind-diesel applications in Alaska villages.

A. Product availability! Choices and better pricing for wind turbines would dramatically improve the economics of projects in Alaska.

Q. Any final comments for our readers?

A. Wind-diesel projects in remote locations are difficult, but the technology is now proven. With current fuel prices, it is an attractive option for generating power.

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