

Richard Ryman column: Wisconsin Public Service looks into buying Iowa wind farm



By [Richard Ryman](#) September 30, 2007

Wisconsin Public Service Corp. is negotiating to buy a yet-to-be-built wind farm in Howard County, Iowa.

Wisconsin utilities are required by state law to increase their renewable energy portfolio 2 percentage points by 2010 and to have 10 percent of their electricity supplied from renewable sources by 2015.

The 66-turbine project would provide the Green Bay-based utility with enough renewable energy, 99 megawatts, to meet its state requirements, maybe to 2015, according to Rob Benninghoff, director of renewable and special projects.

It isn't a done deal. WPS normally doesn't talk about deals in negotiation, but Benninghoff said that since the company's name was being batted around Iowa, it was best to acknowledge the talks.

"That puts us in a really good position" for meeting renewable energy requirements, Benninghoff said of the potential deal.

WPS has been trying to acquire wind power for some time, but various projects have run into road blocks. A project in Fond du Lac originally scheduled to provide 70 megawatts is likely to be considerably smaller, having run into the usual sort of objections from local government and residents.

Ehrfurth opens office

Paul Ehrfurth, former leader of the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce's economic development division, has joined Equity Commercial Real Estate.

His office is at 2822 Ramada Way, Ashwaubenon, where he is sharing a building with Central States Mortgage Co. Equity Commercial is an affiliate of the mortgage company.

Ehrfurth was vice president of economic development and leader of Advance for the chamber from 1996 to 2006.

He will be working on commercial listings and real estate development in the Fox Valley and New North markets.

He also operates Paul W. Ehrfurth & Associates, an economic development consulting firm.

The telephone number is (920) 338-9101.