Scott Updates Chamber Crowd on Wind Power Project

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Those gathered Monday for the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce's monthly member luncheon were treated to a detailed update on Kodiak Electric Association's wind power project. CEO Darron Scott of KEA told members that "the sky's the limit" when it comes to the project's potential to reduce reliance on diesel fuel and lower energy costs. KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

Reminding the audience that KEA's goal is to be operating on 95-percent renewable energy by 2020, Scott said reliance on diesel fuel must be curtailed. He said the ultimate aim of the wind power project is to do just that, while lowering costs to consumers. Presenting pictures of the construction process to date, he also said he's pleased with how the project has progressed.

-- (Scott 1 48 sec. "Last year at this time ... on the optimistic side of things.")

Scott said KEA's current system is based on about 80-percent hydro power, generated by the Terror Lake facility, and about 20-percent diesel. He said the wind power project will initially cut the diesel percentage almost in half and gradually decrease it after that.

-- (Scott 2 15 sec. "We wanted to try to cut ... even more if we could.")

Scott described how the hydro and wind power projects will work together to accomplish that goal.

-- (Scott
3 39 sec. "Terror Lake
is going to be ... that we have in
Kodiak.")

He
also described how the wind turbines will function technically to produce power.

-- (Scott
4 35 sec. "An anemometer reading ... too much wind for the machine.")

Scott
pointed out that the blades are now turning, at least when the wind is blowing.
He referred to the current state as "test operation mode," which he said will
continue for a period of time before the turbines are fully operational.

-- (Scott
5 24 sec. "We've still got more of ... Lake fills
up a little bit.")

The three
one-point-five megawatt turbines have the capacity to produce about
12-point-two million kilowatt hours of power annually. Scott said the current
estimate is that this will save about three-point-two million dollars a year in
fuel costs. He said the wind power project, originally budgeted at
23-point-three million dollars, is likely to come in under-budget. KEA hopes to
have the turbines completed and online by early fall.

I'm
Erik Wander.

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