

Windmill Construction On Track

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Kodiak

Electric Association will begin constructing three wind turbines atop Pillar Mountain soon. On Tuesday, two members of KEA's Board of Directors joined KMXT's Mike Murray to discuss how the project is progressing.

According to KEA, preparation work is coming along well, positioning them to begin erecting the wind turbines beginning in June. KEA board member Michael Brechan provided an update on the status of the project.

-- (Brechan 1 28 sec. "About four years ago ... about the 1st of June.")

Along with transporting 80-foot-long sections of tower and about 28 loads of crane, the three 128-foot long blades will make their way through town and up the mountain, an event board member Jay Johnston referred to as the "blade parade."

-- (Johnston 1 11 sec. "I think it will be really ... once those are erected.")

Johnston said the three 1.5 megawatt wind turbines will produce about 12 million kilowatt hours of energy a year, thus significantly reducing reliance on diesel fuel and ultimately saving customers money.

-- (Johnston 2 41 sec. "Hopefully displacing about ... be worth it in the long run.")

Johnston called financing the wind project a very important part of the process of realizing KEA's goals. He said it was a major element of the project, with funding coming from various sources and some yet to be secured.

-- (Johnston 3 43 sec. "We've secured funding from ... it's hard to say.")

Brechan said that people have to understand that the wind project is an expensive one relative to the cost of power from the Terror Lake hydro-electric project. However, he said that given the uncertain nature of the cost of diesel fuel, the project will ultimately prove economical.

-- (Brechan 2 23 sec. "If you start comparing ... good sense for our community.")

According to KEA, the wind turbines will be assembled from June through early July. One of KEA's major concerns is weather, because high winds and fog could potentially cause significant delays in construction. Once the turbines are assembled, however, KEA will begin operational testing. KEA hopes to have the turbines completed and online by early fall.

I'm Erik Wander.

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