

## Extension helps SW Iowa find comfort zone with wind energy

Over the span of two decades, Iowa has gone from virtually no electricity generated from wind to ranking second in the nation behind only Texas. And, even in the face of an ailing economy, growth of wind energy generation here doesn't seem to be slowing.

Iowa State University Extension has been a major player in providing research-based information regarding wind energy generation to property owners around the state. Some are interested in turbines for private use. Others have been approached to sell wind energy rights on their land to large scale developers. Interested landowners and attorneys contacted ISU Extension Education Director, Heidi Carter, about a landowner meeting on the subject in December 2008.

ISU Extension farm management field specialist, Tim Eggers, says landowners are eager to profit from the push for sources of "green" energy. But, he says wind turbines are relatively new to southwest Iowa and many landowners and attorneys have questions about the documents developers are asking them to sign.

Eggers and Carter facilitated a meeting on January 2<sup>nd</sup> in Clarinda that was attended by over 125 people from six southwest Iowa counties. Information on wind energy issues was presented from Iowa State University's Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation (CALT), and local residents had the chance to question a panel of farmers from Adair and Union counties who banded together in 2007 to successfully negotiate contract terms with wind developers there.



As a result, in late January, a similar landowners' group was formed by farmers in southern Page and Fremont counties where new wind energy development is in the works. Shenandoah farmer, Craig Harris, a landowner on the steering committee, said residents are excited about the prospects of wind turbines coming into the area but want to make sure there aren't winners and losers. "Our goal," Harris said, "is to make sure it's a good deal for everyone: landowners, tenants, the community and the developer. We want to still feel good about this 20 years down the road."

According to CALT director, ISU professor, Roger McEowen, wind energy contract terms are still very much in the formative stages. "I'd say wind energy leases today are about where oil leases were 100 years ago," McEowen said. "It's very important both sides understand what they're signing."

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**-Craig Harris, Shenandoah farmer**

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For more information about this and other Iowa State University Extension programs, contact Heidi Carter, Page County Extension Education Director, 712-542-5171, [heidic@iastate.edu](mailto:heidic@iastate.edu); Tim Eggers, Extension Farm Management Field Specialist, [tegggers@iastate.edu](mailto:tegggers@iastate.edu), OR, your local county Extension office

April, 2009