

Wind Farm Garner High Praise

The U.S. Department of Energy Wind and Hydro-power Technologies Wind Powering America Program (WPA) has recognized Klickitat PUD and Cowlitz PUD with the 2009 Wind Power Pioneer Award.

The utilities were selected for the honor over 15 other public power systems nominated from across the United States by a panel of wind, utility, government, national laboratory and public experts for its leadership, innovation, commitment and 68-percent ownership of the 205-megawatt White Creek Wind Project, the nation's largest public power initiated wind project.

The White Creek wind farm covers 9,500 acres of ranchland leased from local farm families in Klickitat County. Its 89 wind turbines produce enough electricity to power 38,000 homes.

Klickitat and Cowlitz PUDs own the majority interest in the project, 46 percent and 26 percent, respectively. Construction began in mid-2006 and was completed and in commercial operation in November 2007.

In 2001, Klickitat and Cowlitz PUDs joined with Lakeview Light and Power, based in Lakewood, and Tanner Electric Cooperative, based in North Bend, with the goal of developing local wind resources.

Because public utilities cannot capitalize on the



Klickitat PUD General Manager Winston Low, third from right, received the U.S. Department of Energy's 2009 Wind Power Pioneer Award along with, left to right, Ned Piper, Cowlitz PUD commissioner; Brian Skeahan, Cowlitz PUD general manager; Buz Ketchum, Cowlitz PUD commissioner; Randy Manion of the Western Area Power Administration and Michelle Suddleson, manager of the Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments program.

federal production tax credits (PTCs) needed to reduce the power output cost, the four utility partners identified private investors who were compatible with their goal of maximizing local control and retaining a cost-based source of electricity, and able to utilize the PTCs.

In 2006, a private investment group, including affiliates of Prudential Capital Group, Lehman Brothers and Summit Power purchased the project. The utility partners all signed 20-year agreements to purchase power from the new owners, with an option to buy back the project in 10 years.

This seventh annual award was created in conjunction

with the American Public Power Association's (APPA) Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments program to recognize public power wind pioneers and leaders.

Klickitat PUD General Manager Winston Low accepted the leadership award at the APPA National Conference in Salt Lake City in June. ■

The Wind Powering America Award was started in 2003 to recognize public power wind pioneers and leaders. Past winners include the consumer-owned utilities serving Waverly, Iowa; Fort Collins, Colorado; Hull, Massachusetts; Austin, Texas; Sacramento, California; and Aspen, Colorado.



In the Klickitat County hills near Dot, 89 wind turbines are capable of producing 205 megawatts of power at the White Creek Wind Project.