
ODC hears wind presentation

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After missing one scheduled appearance because of weather and showing up late on another try, David Miller, vice chancellor for research and commercialization for the Texas Tech University System, finally got to make a formal presentation Thursday before the board of the Odessa Development Corp.

Miller said that Texas Tech's [National Institute of Renewable Energy](#) and National Wind Resource Center are bringing together government and trade organizations, universities and private corporations to work on bringing wind power manufacturing to West Texas.

While many wind farms have come to West Texas — and more are expected to come in the coming years as power transmission capacity increases, Miller said that more jobs come through the addition of facilities where turbines and other industry products are made.

So far the program has received \$8.4 million from the governor's Emerging Technology Fund, \$8 million from Texas Tech and \$17 million from industry, Miller said.

"That seems like a big number, and it is, but it's not in terms of where the industry needs to go," he said.

The project's successes include helping land an Alstom assembly plant in Amarillo as well as developing a research wind farm, Miller said.

Miller said he would like ODC to join other economic development groups who've assisted the wind projects. Financial contributions range from \$10,000 from San Angelo to \$150,000 from the Amarillo Economic Development Corp. How much ODC wishes to commit depends on what type of development it is interested in landing.

"We really just provide a list of what other people have committed," he said.

In other action Thursday, Mike George, Odessa Chamber of Commerce president, introduced Drew Crutcher as the chamber's interim economic development director. George said Crutcher would serve while the chamber looks for a permanent replacement for Gary Vest, who resigned last month.

Crutcher, a retired engineer, is a founder of Landgraf, Crutcher & Associates.

"Drew has hit the ground running, and we think he's going to be a tremendous asset," George said.

Crutcher said he is not interested in the job on a permanent basis.

"I just came here to help," he said.

Crutcher said he has been busy so far, with 15 companies showing interest in land at the Odessa Industrial Development Corp.'s industrial park.

If all those requests go through, Crutcher said he is concerned about running out of land.

“Some of those will wind their way through the incentive process and some will wind their way through ODC,” Crutcher said.

Arleene Loyd, the chamber’s director of business retention and expansion, said officials recently met with representatives from Flour Corp., the Irving-based contractor on Summit Power Group’s planned Texas Clean Energy Project, a \$2 billion coal gasification plant that is designed to capture 90 percent of the carbon dioxide it produces.



Loyd said the company was interested in knowing about available workers during the construction process, which is expected to begin in about a year. The plant, planned 20 miles west of Odessa in Penwell, is expected to have more than 1,000 construction workers.

“They’re here accessing what the labor pool is, what the skill level is,” Loyd said.

The board tabled a vote on new members for ODC’s compliance committee, which makes recommendations on the qualifications of applicants for ODC funding. One member, Thomas Blackstone, resigned from the committee. In addition to filling Blackstone’s place, board member Frank Deaderick, who filled in for absent board President Austin Keith, said he would like to add a ninth member to the committee, since it often has problems reaching a quorum at meetings.