

# Small Wind: Co-ops Make a Difference

By Jonathan Lewis

On October 25, a dedication ceremony was held on the Caldwell-Davis farm outside of Goldendale.

Two small-scale wind generators had been raised nearby and were pumping electricity onto the grid, even as the speakers delivered their messages and thanks.

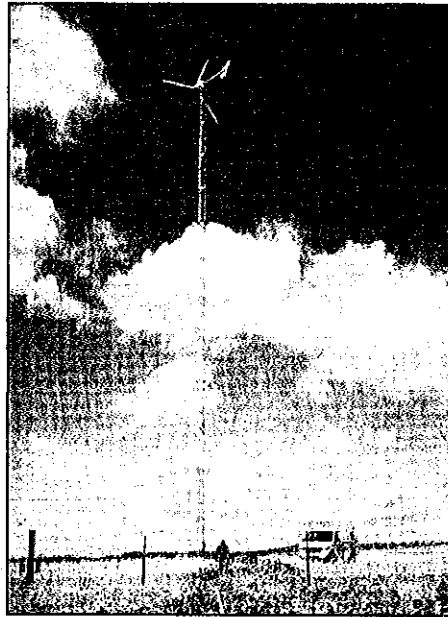
The day was both a celebration of years of hard work by numerous agencies that attended and a hopeful look into the future.

Each Bergey Exel 10 generator is sized to power an average home or small business.

The amazing thing about the new systems is their ability to synchronize with the power company's grid connection.

Net metering laws make it possible to "save" excess electricity on the grid and then use it when the wind is not blowing, virtually zeroing out electric usage charges on your bill.

Our Wind Co-op and Northwest



Sustainable Energy for Economic Development are the nonprofits spearheading these and eight other installations around the Northwest.

The primary goal of Our Wind Co-op is to show small wind can work in Northwest rural applications and that it works best as part

of a co-op.

Co-ops have long been a part of life in the West—neighbors working together to get something done. With wind power, co-ops help give these systems the push they need to become established.

Of the two newly dedicated systems, Ed Kennel's was the first, and sits atop an 80-foot tower on his Luna Butte property.

Installed in October 2003, it produced nearly 14,000 kilowatt-hours (kwh) of electricity in its first year.

After seeing Ed's tower go up, Gwen and Fred Bassetti of the Caldwell-Davis farm decided a generator might work well for their property.

The process took almost a year. After filling out the initial application with Our Wind Co-op, they had to record the wind speed on their property, get the appropriate permitting; aviary and archaeological surveys and go through the county's conditional use process.

Once the paperwork was in order, a big truck rolled out onto the pasture and delivered the parts.

Gwen's son supervised the concrete work and many local contractors helped with the trenching, fencing, wiring and crane work.

On September 1, the Bassetti's tower went up.

Klickitat County is now a front-runner in the Northwest for small wind. With an eye toward co-ops of owner/producers—making their own power from a non-depleting resource—we can hope to see many more systems go up around the county.

Some compare distributed wind power's potential to the rural electrification programs of the 1940s. We can all hope they meet with similar success. ■



This was the scene at the dedication ceremony at the Caldwell-Davis farm near Goldendale.

*Jonathan Lewis is from Seraphin Electric Company, which helped erect and wire the tower.*