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## Wind turbine roundup

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Casper is primed to become a major staging area for wind energy projects across the Rocky Mountain region.

The Casper Logistics Hub (CLH Global), a 700-acre heavy industrial site located at 6750 N. 6 Mile Road, has started receiving hundreds of General Electric wind turbine components like blades and nacelles for eventual distribution to wind farms in Wyoming and adjacent states.

"I think within the next 12 months, we're going to see a heck of a lot of activity," said Rich Fairservis, a principal with Granite Peak Development.

The Casper hub joins other big wind turbine distribution points at Manly, Iowa, and Sweetwater, Texas.

Fairservis said the first turbines are not dedicated to any particular project. They will be held at a 10-acre lighted and secured site at the hub. "We're going to expand it to 50 acres just for wind components," he added.

There will be similar areas for big transformers used in electrical substations, and eventually, for components in the proposed "smart grid."

Fairservis thinks the traffic of wind turbines components will continue for years to come. "Right now, there's probably 14 projects in the planning stages over the course of the next two to 10 years," he said. The result could be the movement of thousands of wind turbines through Casper.

The Obama administration was pushing a goal of 25 percent of U.S. electricity to come from renewable sources by 2025, but Congress may have other ideas.

In addition to a staging area, the Casper Logistics Hub could become a location for manufacturing or refurbishing wind turbines parts. Fairservis said Granite Peak Development would contribute up to 50 acres for such a plant.

The Casper Logistics Hub could work in concert with the foreign trade zone at Natrona County



Crews from Energy Transportation Inc. place fiberglass blades for wind turbines in a line after unloading them from rail cars at the CTran rail yard last week. (Dan Cepeda/Star-Tribune)

International Airport.

The trade zone provides certain tax benefits for companies involved in international commerce on goods that pass through, are manufactured, or are stored at the trade zone.

"Now with the rail yard and the airport working together, we're able to expand the boundaries of the free trade zone," Fairservis said.

Airport Manager Glenn Januska said discussions are ongoing about adding the Casper Logistics Hub to the foreign trade zone.

He said the combination of the hub's railroad operations, the airport and good highway access could create a potent mix.

Items like wind turbine components from outside the U.S. can be stored duty free at the foreign trade zone. Manufacturing processes also could benefit, Januska said.

He added that the airport has more than 5,000 acres of land available, which could be used in expanding the hub.

Energy Transportation of Casper is a partner at the logistics hub. It provides heavy cranes to handle wind turbines as well as specialized trucking. The Bighorn Divide and Wyoming Railroad based in Riverton handles the switch yard and transloads materials coming off the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line.

Both the Casper Logistics Hub, and the CTRAN rail yard and transloading, are under the organizational umbrella of Granite Peak Development.

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