



Norton Shores to have its own wind turbine

Sunday, March 15, 2009

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Dick Maher, Norton Shores' community development director

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NORTON SHORES -- Norton Shores officials soon will be able to provide residents with firsthand information about installing and operating a small wind turbine.

Supported by a grant from the Eklund Alternative Energy Fund of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, the city will be putting up a Swift wind turbine on a city building. The information generated by the wind turbine will be available to residents considering a turbine for their own home.

"The main purpose is to explore wind energy and be a proponent of wind power," said Dick Maher, the city's community development director. "I think it's a great project."

Lou and Ann Eklund's fund is offering similar donations to other Muskegon-area municipalities. Muskegon is expected to put two of the donated turbines on two of its buildings, likely the new Central Fire Station on Terrace Street and the city's water filtration plant at Pere Marquette Park.

Norton Shores likely will put its wind turbine on top of the municipal building, 4814 Henry. City staff also suggested Fire Station No. 3, 1100 E. Pontaluna.

All the donated turbines are Swift models produced by Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids. The small turbines with a 7-foot blade produce a small percentage of the electrical power at municipal buildings.

Maher said he estimates the turbine will produce 1 to 2 percent of the power needed at Norton Shores' city hall.

While the foundation grant will cover the roughly \$10,000 cost of the turbine, the city will pay for installation -- about \$1,500.

A three-month wind study is expected to begin soon at the municipal building. Maher met last week with Cascade Engineering personnel concerning the specifics for the wind study.

Maher said the project will allow city staff to be better able to answer questions from residents about wind turbines. The Norton Shores City Council last year passed one of the area's first ordinances allowing wind turbines in residential, commercial and industrial areas.

Chronicle file photo * Cory Morse

A Swift Wind Turbine like the one installed on top of the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts, above, soon will be installed on a city building in Norton Shores.

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RAIL: Armed with their own wind turbine, Norton Shores officials are expecting to be able to provide residents with details about wind power.

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Dick Maher, Norton Shores' community development director.