

Let's use what Mother Nature has provided

by Shawn Christenson, a sophomore at Bureau Valley High School in Illinois.

Why do we keep denying the great ingenuity of Mother Nature! Over the decades man has come up with some absolutely fantastic new inventions and ideas. Many of which has been extremely useful to mankind. Some of these inventions and ideas however have had devastating results and consequences such as the use of fossil fuels. Yes these fuels have given us many uses but at what cost. Green House gases that has destroyed the ozone layer, global warming which has altered our weather patterns causing devastating disasters that has cost billions of dollars in property damage and thousands of lives. Not only that, we go to war and protect countries whose fossil fuels we so heavily rely on and put our soldiers' lives at risk and cost the US hundreds of billions of dollars and it comes out of yours and my pockets. Why do we keep doing these crazy things when Mother Nature has a completely clean and reliant free means of correcting much of this problem? The answer is Renewable Wind Power and Walnut Ridge Wind Farm can bring this to us!

Someone has to be the leaders so why not us? Let us lead the way...

Do you realize that the US is second only to China in overall usage of Wind Power? At the end of 2010 the US's capacity of wind energy was 40,000 megawatts or 3% of all electricity produced! That is great, but just think of all the fossil fuels we could save and the decrease of greenhouse gases we would produce and the jobs we could make if we were to just increase production of Wind Energy!

Currently China, the US, India, South Korea, the Philippines, Mexico, Argentina, Egypt, South Africa, Iran, and Monaco all use Wind Power to some degree. The Philippines use wind power the most with it 40% of all electricity being produced by wind turbines. With all these countries going to wind energy how can we as a small community deny that this is not the way to go?

I know you are probably thinking that the turbines are any eyesore and that they are noisy and the cause flicker. Well please let me voice my opinion. We have a turbine at our school and it is not noisy and it doesn't look bad. As a matter of fact it shows other schools that our school is going green and we are trying to protect this great nation, and as for the flicker well it doesn't seem to affect our televisions and computers in the school and we use them every day.

WIND ENERGY FACTS

Let me give you a few facts on Wind Energy that I have researched.

1. There is no water or air pollution and does not contribute to global warming.
2. Decreases greenhouse effect
3. Completely renewable and readily available
4. No toxic waste
5. Best answer to rising gas and petroleum prices
6. No need to be so reliant on foreign fuels so no need to fight to protect these items resulting in saving of soldiers' lives and the savings of hundreds of billions of dollars to fight wars we should not be fighting.
7. Generates tens of thousands of jobs
8. Substantially helps the US meet its economic and energy needs
9. Generates billions of dollars through economic activity
10. Local taxes are boosted
11. Rural communities and local economics are revitalized
12. Cheaper cost to produce than fossil fuels (wind energy costs have decreased by 80% since the 1980's therefore resulting in cheaper cost to the consumer)
13. Do not take as much space as building an oil refinery or a nuclear power plant
14. Wind farms can be built in a matter of months unlike refineries and nuclear power plants therefore increasing the savings
15. Wind is free, no need to make foreign countries rich off the American people
16. Wind can be captured easily and can be widely distributed.

With all these positive aspects of wind energy why would anyone choose not to use it? I know I am just a 16 year old teenage boy, but I am not only thinking of my future but futures to come. Do you want nuclear reactors toxic waste leaking into your grandchildren's water or air? Look at Chernobyl. It has been thirty years and they still can't live there and they have no idea if it will ever be inhabitable again. They still have no idea of the damage done there to the fish and wildlife but they do know there are mutations that have happened there and that they are still going on today. If we were to have another World War, where do you think the first targets would be? The nuclear power plants because it would do far greater damage than hitting our military bases. The devastation would be far greater than the Atomic bomb. Then they would aim for the oil refineries. Without fuel there is no way to produce the energy needed to run our military defenses. Wind energy would not give off any toxic waste if hit and they could quickly build a replacement to get the electricity back on line.

We need this renewable source of energy in our community not only for economic revitalization but to show other communities they we are not afraid to look to the future and that we are thinking of the generations to come. Someone has to be the leaders so why not us? Let us lead the way and when people see the positive results it has had on our community then others will follow leading to a much safer and greener earth not only for us but for the plants and animals that live here with us. Humans are supposed to be the keepers and protectors of the earth not the destroyers. Show our community that we are ready and willing to create a safer and greener future for the generations to come so they will not have to clean up our mess and maybe it will be cheaper for them to live because they won't be spending billions on wars, building of toxic energy plants, or cleaning up our messes from oil spills and toxic waste.

Now is the time to step up and take the lead for a better future! Let's start using what Mother Nature has provided and what Walnut Ridge Wind Farm can build to make our community great!

Shawn Christensen

GERONIMO ENERGY

Geronimo Energy is a Minnesota-based utility-scale wind and solar energy developer with projects located throughout the United States. With deep roots in agriculture, Geronimo prides itself on developing wind farms that are farmer-friendly, community-driven, and beneficial for rural communities. Geronimo boasts several operating wind farms and an aggregate development pipeline of over 4,000 megawatts. For more information, please visit www.geronimoenergy.com or call 952-988-9000.

