

Wind farm to be built off Galveston Island

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One of the first offshore wind energy operations in the nation is to be built in an area seven miles off Galveston Island in the Gulf of Mexico.

Texas officials say Galveston Offshore Wind LLC, a unit of a Louisiana company called Wind Energy Systems Technologies, plans to build 50 turbines -- each with a diameter the length of a football field, The Dallas Morning News reported Tuesday. The site is expected to produce electricity by 2010.

State officials say the wind farm will be designed to produce 150 megawatts of electricity, enough to supply 40,000 homes.

Royalties from the facility will go into the Texas Permanent School Fund, which helps pay for public education.

"Coastal wind power has come to the United States and found a home in Texas," Jerry Patterson, commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, told the Morning News.

"The expense is building it," he added. "After that, you don't need any coal, you don't need any fuel, you don't need any nuke."

Wind Energy Systems will first build two meteorological towers to collect wind data, as well as research bird migration patterns. The data will be used to design the turbines.

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