

# Wind Builds the Future in Host Communities

## QUOTES SHEET



Communities across the country, particularly those in rural areas, currently face a barrage of challenges as they seek to build vibrant local economies. Attracting and retaining young people, adequately funding schools, and providing essential services have all proved difficult in recent years. And that was before the COVID-induced recession added another layer of uncertainty. However, some communities are overcoming these obstacles better than others—those hosting wind projects.

Wind projects pay over \$1.6 billion in state and local taxes and landowner lease payments every year, and this number only goes up as more wind projects come online. This critical revenue helps bridge budget shortfalls and allows communities to invest in their future, providing new resources to expand opportunities in their schools and social services. The jobs needed to build, operate and maintain wind projects offer young people careers that will support their families without needing to leave home, and lease payments provide farmers and ranchers a drought-proof cash crop that stabilizes agricultural economies.

### **Ken Becker, Executive Director at SEED MDD**

*Nolan County, Texas*

“I think the challenge for everybody is how are we going to operate, and do these challenges change the way we do things. We’ve been at this for 20 years, so it doesn’t feel like a new industry for us anymore. We’re part of the critical baseload renewable energy industry and we’re not going to let the pandemic alter our course, a course people are relying on for power and jobs.”

“These jobs offer young workers the ability to provide a good living and high quality of life for their families, an opportunity that wasn’t always available in rural settings.”



Ken Becker

### **Nancy McDowell, O’Brien County Supervisor**

*O’Brien County, Iowa*

“Between the added valuation and increased taxes, we were able to actually reduce tax rates when many counties in Iowa were having to raise taxes immensely to cover increased costs.”



Highland Wind Farm construction, O’Brien County, Iowa

### **Emily Davenport, Chair of Logan County Board**

*Logan County, Iowa*

“This newer source of revenue is more important than ever during uncertain economic times, including the COVID-19 pandemic. We’re fortunate to have an extra layer of certainty in our budgets as a result of the local wind projects.”

## Jeff Bryan, Tri Point School District Superintendent

*Ford & Livingston Counties, Illinois*

“The wind farms in our district have been life-changing for our students, our teachers, and the future of our district. The two wind farms in our district together generated over \$2 million in revenue in their first year on our tax rolls. We will see more than \$3 million in revenue over the life of these projects.”

“With those funds, we have our own, local stream of funding allowing us to confidently make long-term investments in our district. To date, we have hired teachers, improved our buildings, and upgraded our technology.”

## Ryan Brown, Economic Development Planner

*Spirit Lake Tribe, North Dakota*

“The project on our tribal land provides almost two-thirds of our energy needs, dramatically reducing our annual utility costs and allowing us to achieve more energy independence. Especially in the wake of COVID-19, the cost savings and the measure of self-reliance provided by wind are a huge weight off our shoulders.”

“Wind energy and other forms of renewables can provide not only the energy independence and lower electricity costs that we’re seeing right here in Fort Totten, but also new job opportunities for locals and even the possibility of additional revenue streams – all while continuing to preserve our land for the next generation.”

“Ultimately, our ability to invest in wind energy in turn allowed us to be able to invest more in other priorities in the long run while furthering our commitment to sustainability. Our utilization of wind power helps us save almost \$500,000 per year that can now be utilized for other programs and services for our tribe. Those savings are a powerful tool to have at our disposal during economic downturns, and our shift to wind is one that we can be proud of for decades to come.”

## Dennis Lindahl, Director of Economic Development

*Williams County, North Dakota*

“A wind project fits directly into what Tioga is seeking: 21st century jobs with a focus on skilled trades, mechanics, construction workers, electricians, plumbers that include using advanced technology, and make use of our focus on STEM certified programs that we have invested in heavily.”

## Darby Paxton, Director of Holt County Economic Development

*Holt County, Nebraska*

“Wind energy is now a part of the community. I shudder to think of how our businesses would have survived the latest pandemic without the increase in permanent residents in Holt County. In a county with a population of around 10,200 people, 50 families can make a world of difference.”



Communities across the country that benefit from homegrown wind energy are celebrating American Wind Week in August.

## Chelsey Briese, Wind Farm Operations Support Facilitator

*Antelope County, Nebraska*

“I had just moved home after college and was looking for something I saw as a career rather than a job. The job opportunities created are vital to drawing in younger generations. I can’t think of any other industry in smaller communities that creates jobs like the wind industry has.”

## Joann Knight, Ford County Economic Development

*Ford County, Kansas*

“Particularly in uncertain economic times, our towns and counties can rely on wind to keep the lights on – both literally and figuratively.”