

Ten Iowa schools have wind turbines making energy, money

by Dar Danielson

A study released this week by a private group finds over a half dozen Iowa schools now are using a wind turbine to generate some of their electricity.

Teresa Galluzzo is a research associate for the Iowa Policy Project and co-author of a new report called "Wind Power and Iowa Schools." She says there are nine K-12 schools and one community college that have installed a wind turbine. Galluzzo says the schools with the windmills have gained more than some home-generated electricity -- they've built community support and they've let the students get first-hand knowledge of "the world's fastest growing energy resource."

Galluzzo says one of the biggest hurdles for schools is coming up with the money to put up the wind turbine. The State of Iowa has a revolving loan program that provides a zero percent interest loan for half of the start-up cost to ease some of the burden. According to Galluzzo, it takes a school district with some determined leadership to get a wind turbine built. She says there are a lot of challenges for schools and a "huge learning curve", but she says every school she talked with was pleased with the project and had good community support.

Galluzzo says her study shows the 10 Iowa schools with turbines are saving or generating between \$3500 and \$560,000 every year. The amount of savings and dollars generated varies by the size of the turbine and the agreement to sell power to their local utility.

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