

## Developers stake wind claims

### 66 bids for hydro-québec projects. Four times the megawatts utility seeks

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From scenic La Malbaie in southern Quebec to James Bay in the north, wind farm developers have staked their spots in one of the largest single solicitations for wind power ever made.

More than 25 developers have proffered 66 bids for wind farms, proposals that total 7,724 megawatts of wind power - almost four times the 2,000 megawatts that Hydro-Québec is seeking to add to its network.

The utility's call "has been taken very very seriously by companies that have a lot of guts and deep pockets, too," Claude Descôteaux, head of a group representing many of Quebec's renewable energy producers, said yesterday.

Preparation of a bid for an earlier, smaller Hydro-Québec wind-power tender cost one promoter about \$10 million, the president of the Association québécoise production d'énergie renouvelable, said in an interview.

Quebec's major push into wind power has been likened to a gold rush. The new wind farms are expected to generate about

\$4 billion in investments, create about 1,500 new jobs and, according to rough calculations by industry insiders, each new wind turbine planted in Quebec will generate gross annual revenues of about \$538 million a year over a life span of up to 25 years.

Included in the competition are such industry heavyweights as TransCanada Energy Ltd., SkyPower Corp., Airtricity Canada and several cooperative ventures, including one in the Lac St. Jean region that saw individual families help underwrite the cost of the bid that would see wind turbines be installed on area farms.

"The diversity of the bids was impressive," said Sean Whittaker of the the Canadian Wind Energy Association. "They were truly all over the map" and varied in size of project envisioned, from huge to less than 10 megawatts.

The largest single proposal among the bids opened yesterday was a 499.5 MW wind farm slated for the James Bay region. SkyPower president Kerry Adler is the principal



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Gilles Coté, Hervé Lamare, Pierre Archambault, Mathieu Lavalée and Eric Chainé prepare for a news conference yesterday near boxes of submissions for the next round of wind farms in Quebec - 2,000 MW of power and the largest single offering in North America.

behind the numbered company that made that bid.

With its partners, Toronto-based SkyPower has submitted seven bids for more than 900 MW, said the company, whose strategy has been to forge links with native communities.

Another huge wind farm proposal for James Bay was submitted by Yudin Energy Inc. It's a 324 MW venture that involves Toronto-based Ventus Energy Inc. Company president John Douglas would not provide further details yesterday.

Earlier this year, The Gazette reported that Yudin, a Ventus joint venture with the Grand Council of Crees of Northern Quebec, had prepared an evaluation for a 1,650 MW project that called for the installation of 1,100 wind turbines in a 500-kilometre corridor on Cree land near Hydro-Québec transmission lines.

At the forefront of the Quebec promoters that submitted bids was Boralex Inc., a Quebec-based producer of green energy. It and partner Gaz Métro, the province's natural-gas utility, submitted three projects totalling 375.5 MW. The power would be developed from three wind farms on the Seigneurie de Beaupré property, undeveloped forest owned by the Séminaire de Québec, just east of Quebec City.

"The winds are excellent there and the visual and sound impacts are very limited," said Boralex spokeswoman Patricia Lemaire.

The wind farm projects are to become operational between 2010 and 2015. Winners of the bids should be announced in the spring of 2008.

Under the terms of the call for tender, developers must guarantee the expenditure of at least 30 per cent of the wind-turbine costs in the Matane and Gaspé regions and at least 60 per cent of total wind farm costs in Quebec.

Five different wind-turbine manufacturers - which will have to prove they meet Quebec's local-content requirements - have been designated by the developers, according to Hydro-Québec. They are: General Electric, which supplied all the wind turbines for the utilities first tendered contract of almost 1,000 MW; AAER Inc., the Quebec firm poised to become Canada's first wind-turbine manufacturer; Enercon Canada Inc. and Repower Systems AG, both companies with roots and experience in Europe; and EKUA, a co-operative linked to a Toronto-based subsidiary of Americas Wind Energy Corp.

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