

NPPD opens office, tells plan to build new wind farm

Wind is a constant in the Panhandle.

Nebraska Public Power District wants to turn that wind into a profit, CEO Bill Fehrman said during a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house Monday at NPPD's new offices in Scottsbluff.

Fehrman said a new wind farm, along the state's northern border, would be similar to the one recently built north of Kimball. That site, about 44 miles south of Scottsbluff, has seven turbine towers that can generate 10.5 megawatts of power.

The utility is looking at 25 or 30 new wind turbines that potentially could produce 50 megawatts of electricity, Fehrman said, enough for about 7,000 homes. Each turbine could cost up to a million dollars, depending on size. If the company were to build as many as projected, Fehrman said NPPD would be looking at a \$60 million to \$70 million investment.

Fehrman said the entire northern border of the state offers a number of ideal locations, but he declined to specify any sites.

A site recommendation could be made to the NPPD board by late summer and construction begin early next year, he said.

New digs

After serving more than 70 years, the Nebraska Public Power District building in downtown Scottsbluff has been retired. NPPD sold the building, which served as headquarters for numerous electrical utility companies, and moved to its new location on First Street, directly north of the YMCA.

On Monday, representatives from the company, members of the news media, the Scottsbluff-Gering United Chamber of Commerce and local diplomats joined in christening the new location.

Originally published in the April 30, 2003 issue of the *Omaha World-Herald*