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Wind Power

Wind power installations recovered somewhat in 2011 as economic stimulus programs wound down and states strove to meet their renewable energy mandates.

The U.S. wind industry installed 6,816 MW in 2011, 31% higher than 2010, for a total of 46,916 MW installed in the U.S. to date, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) annual report, released April 12. "In 2011, wind provided just a hair under 3% of total electricity in 2011," said AWEA Chief Economist Elizabeth Salerno said during an association webinar. "To put this in perspective, we were under 1% just a few years ago." Wind capacity has increased with an average annual growth of 35% year-over-year over the past five years. Wind capacity captured 31% of new power plant construction in 2011, trailing natural gas, which grabbed 42% of the United States total.

The ownership model is shifting as well, as utilities become more comfortable with the technology, AWEA says. The majority of wind projects employ the power purchase agreement model, with third-party off-takers buying generation. But that is changing. In the projects in 2011, 25% of those megawatts were under direct utility ownership. "That's a strong increase from previous years when it was 15% of new assets," Salerno said. "This is a hedging product that can be brought onto system and it can balance the portfolio if you're exposed to technologies that have fluctuating prices."

There are more than 8,300 MW under construction, setting the stage for a strong 2012. "There's an uptick in project activity in every region of the country," Salerno said. South Dakota and Iowa lead a record five states that received more than 10% of their electricity from wind in 2011. Seven states have at least 4,000 wind jobs apiece, and the list shows the industry's geographic reach, stretching from Iowa to Texas to Illinois, Ohio, Colorado, California and Michigan. Meanwhile, Kansas' position at the top of the list for under construction wind projects is setting the stage for a very strong 2012.

Illinois has 615 MW currently under construction.

"American wind energy is creating American jobs and affordable electricity all across the country," said AWEA CEO Denise Bode. "We are powering one of the country's biggest sources of Made-in-the-USA manufacturing jobs and a vital source of economic development despite the down economy."

Electricity Pricing Areas – Apr 17, 2012 April

On-Peak	Per kWh
Cinergy	\$.02960
PJM West	\$.03627

ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Apr 1-Apr 30, 2011	\$.03448
May 1- May 31	\$.03954
June 1 - June 30	\$.03851
July 1 thru July 31	\$.05170
Aug 1 - Aug 31	\$.04064
Sep 1 - Sep 30	\$.03058
Oct 1- Oct 31	\$.02968
Nov 1- Nov 30	\$.02816
Dec 1 - Dec 31	\$.02971
Jan 1 -Jan 31	\$.03043
Feb 1-Feb 29	\$.02963
Mar 1 thru Mar 31	\$.02894
April 1 - April 16	\$.02629

Weather Today: Abundant sunshine. High 54F. Winds NE at 5 to 10 mph. **Tonight:** Generally clear. Low 42F. Winds ESE at 10 to 15 mph. **Wed:** Sunny along with a few clouds. High around 70F. Winds SSW at 20 to 30 mph. **Wed night:** Overcast with rain showers at times. Low 53F. Winds SSW at 10 to 20 mph. Chance of rain 50%. **Thu:** Showers possible. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the upper 40s. **Fri:** Showers. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 30s. **Sat:** Mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the mid 30s.

