

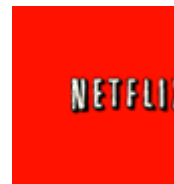


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Vol. 11, Issue 171 - Tuesday, June 20, 2006

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Classifieds

All blowing well for wind farm

Big Isle officials report no problems with the month-old farm

By Rod Thompson
rthompson@starbulletin.com

HILO » The Big Island's newest source of power, a 10.5-megawatt wind farm near Upolu Point at the northern tip of the island, has demonstrated its reliability during a one-month start-up period, Hawaii Electric Light Co. President Warren Lee said.

All 16 of Hawi Renewable Development's 16 Vestas turbines have been in operation since mid-May, Lee said.

"We haven't seen anything too dramatic. It's going smoothly," he said.

"Going smoothly" is increasingly important as the Big Island and the state move toward added reliance on wind and other renewable power sources.

Any time the wind stops blowing or comes in gusts, fossil-fuel power generators such as combustion turbines have to jump in to fill the difference. Power from wind means buying less foreign oil, but it also means greater uncertainty about whether enough wind is blowing.

Earlier this month, Gov. Linda Lingle signed a bill requiring the state's utilities to have 20 percent of their power come from renewable sources by 2020. The Big Island already has 22 percent, Lee said.

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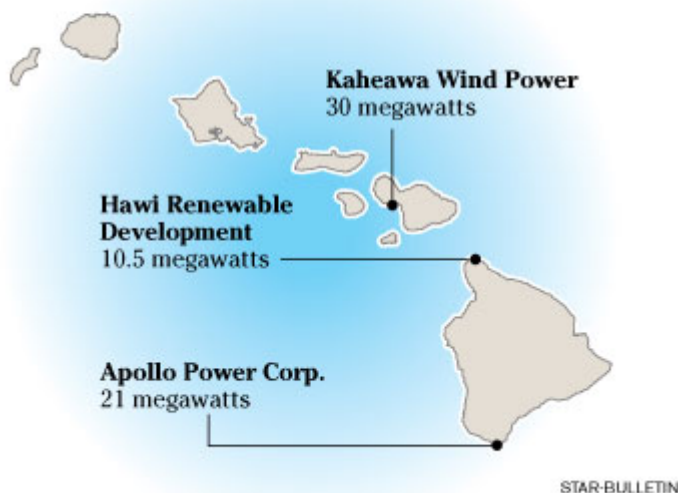
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ISLAND POWER SOURCES BEING BUILT

Hawi Renewable Development has built 16 wind turbines to produce 10.5 megawatts near Upolu Point on the Big Island. Apollo Power Corp. near South Point is planning 14 wind turbines with a combined capacity of 21 megawatts. They will replace aging machines that produce a maximum of 7 megawatts. On a ridge above Maalaea Harbor on Maui, Kaheawa Wind Power is finishing 20 turbines with a total capacity of 30 megawatts.



Three wind projects coming on line will add up to more than 60 megawatts, enough power for more than 7,000 homes when all is blowing well.

Besides Hawi Renewable's 10.5 megawatts, Apollo Power Corp. near South Point at the bottom of the Big Island is planning 14 GE wind turbines with a combined capacity of 21 megawatts. They will replace aging machines that produce 7 megawatts at best.

On a ridge above Maalaea Harbor on Maui, Kaheawa Wind Power is putting finishing touches on 20 GE turbines with a total capacity of 30 megawatts.

Last week, Kaheawa had nine of the 20 in operation, regularly producing 10 megawatts and sometimes up to 13 megawatts, said Maui Electric engineering manager Neil Shinyama.

Besides those projects, the partnership installing Kaheawa, Makana Nui Associates and UPC Wind Partners LLC, has also won the right to build 10 to 15 megawatts for Kauai Island Utility Cooperative at an undecided location.

The choice of GE machines for two of the three new sites is due to the fact that they are "more user-friendly," Shinyama said.

The GE machines have features that let them stay on line when wind stops, regulate their pace and shut off some while others continue, a GE statement said.

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Tools

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Denmark-based Vestas, used at Upolu, is the world's largest producer of wind turbines.

HELCO operates its own 2.3-megawatt wind farm at Lalamilo near Waimea, where output is smoothed by a trailer-size PureWave Electronic Shock Absorber.

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