

## Horizon Wind Defines Responsible Energy Development

Company Sets Standard with Unprecedented Conservation Efforts in Kansas

**Kansas City, September 23, 2008.** Horizon Wind Energy, LLC, a leading wind project developer, owner, and operator, signed an agreement today with the Ranchland Trust of Kansas [RTK] and The Nature Conservancy of Kansas [Conservancy] that demonstrates an unprecedented investment by a wind farm developer in prairie ecosystem conservation. Horizon Wind Energy will invest in a 20,000-acre offsite habitat restoration program, including an anticipated 13,100 acres of permanent conservation easements, which will benefit numerous species of grassland birds, with targeted benefits for the greater prairie-chicken. Horizon's investment agreement, brokered by Wayne Walker Conservation Consulting LLC, will supplement additional investment provided by wildlife conservation groups and state and federal agencies. The purpose of this venture is to offset the potential on-site impacts of Horizon's Meridian Way Wind Farm on the greater prairie-chicken and other grassland species. According to the agreement, the Conservancy may advance loans to RTK, if needed, to assure timely completion of major habitat restoration and protection work. Ranchland Trust of Kansas will hold and manage the associated conservation easements.

"Horizon believes that wind energy must be developed in a responsible and progressive manner that moves towards achieving a sustainable domestic energy supply while protecting local ecological resources. We are happy to make this investment in the natural environment of the State of Kansas," said Chief Development Officer, Gabriel Alonso.

"We are excited about this project, because it provides a rare opportunity to leverage significant private resources for the permanent protection of privately owned grasslands, improvement of grazing resources, and enhancement of wildlife habitat on privately owned ranch lands," said Mike Beam, Executive Director of RTK. "The RTK Board of Directors has a passion for conserving our nation's grasslands for future generations, and this project is a big boost in our efforts to make a difference. RTK's volunteer Board of Directors and staff are grateful to have gained Horizon's confidence in our ability to do the job."

Horizon Wind Energy hired a team of world-class Kansas prairie scientists in 2003 to determine the potential local ecological impacts of the construction and operation of the Meridian Way Wind Farm, located in Cloud County. The team included Professor Emeritus of Kansas State University and Kansas' leading prairie grouse biologist, Dr. Robert Robel; Kansas State University Professor of Park Management and Conservation, Dr. Ted Cable; and Prairie Ecologist of the Kansas Biological Survey, Dr. Kelly Kindscher. Their multi-year effort resulted in the

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best available research and studies on conservation in Kansas' special grassland ecosystem. In addition, Horizon invited the Kansas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy to visit the Meridian Way Wind Farm site to provide an independent habitat impact assessment early in the development phase.

The outcome of the pre-construction investigations was a detailed report describing the likely risks the project might pose to the greater prairie-chicken, other grassland birds, and the grassland prairie ecosystem that occupies a portion of the project footprint. The study sited possible impacts resulting from habitat fragmentation from roads and the presence of tall wind turbine towers. The report further recommends how to effectively mitigate for impacts to the greater prairie-chicken and the likely costs associated with mitigating voluntarily.

Based upon these scientific findings, Horizon Wind Energy committed to fund a voluntary conservation program and included the cost of the ecological offsets program into the wind farm's financial model. When the company responded to utilities' requests for proposals for wind energy, the energy price "internalized" the projected local environmental impact, which is typically treated as an "externality" in traditional economic models. Avoiding net ecological losses often associated with such development in native prairies will allow this project to provide "green" energy in a more holistic sense of the term. The benefits to Horizon included the opportunity to uniquely market the Meridian Way Wind Farm by highlighting the use of voluntarily conservation for on-site impacts as a competitive advantage in the marketplace and providing Meridian Way's customers with the assurance that they would buy electricity from a full-cycle, responsibly developed project. Horizon is optimistic that this project and associated conservation will set a high standard for responsible development across the wind industry as wind provides an ever greater percentage of both the nation's and world's energy supply. Meridian Way Wind Farm, with 201 MW of installed capacity, will power more than 65,000 homes served by The Empire Electric District and Westar Energy in the Kansas region with clean, renewable energy.

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The Conservancy's Kansas State Director, Alan Pollom, sees great promise for the implementation of this project. "In addition to the habitat rehabilitation and protection benefits, it also sets a solid standard for ecologically responsible wind energy development. I would urge all wind developers and power purchasers to embrace the reality that concern for our environment extends well beyond the issue of air emissions. We applaud the Ranchland Trust of Kansas for their leadership, as well as Horizon for their enlightened approach to this initiative."

In June 2007 Horizon Wind Energy signed a 105 megawatt power purchase agreement with the Empire District Electric Company. In September of 2007 Horizon signed a 96 MW power purchase agreement with Westar Energy.

"From their earliest days in Kansas and our first conversations, Horizon was exceptionally committed to understanding the potential environmental impacts of wind turbines on wildlife. Their siting choices, the broadly beneficial conservation easements, and the on-going cooperative research on the turbines' effects on greater prairie-chickens well reflect the high value placed on the prairie and its wildlife by the partners in the Meridian Way project. Westar Energy is proud to be a part of this," said Brad Loveless, Manager, Biology and Conservation Programs, Westar Energy.

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#### **About Horizon Wind Energy**

Based in Houston, Texas and with regional offices in New York, Oregon, Illinois, California, Colorado, and Minnesota, Horizon Wind Energy has developed more than 2,000 megawatts (MW), operates over 1,500 MW of wind farms. Horizon currently has over 11,000 MW in its development pipeline. Horizon is owned by EDP Renováveis, a global leader in the renewable energy sector. Currently, EDP Renováveis is the world's fourth largest wind energy company. For more information, please visit [www.horizonwind.com](http://www.horizonwind.com).

#### **About Ranchland Trust of Kansas**

The Ranchland Trust of Kansas (RTK) is a land trust affiliated with the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), headquartered in Topeka, Kansas. KLA, formed in 1894, is a trade association that represents the state's multi-billion dollar cattle industry at both the state and federal levels, with a focus on legislative and regulatory issues. In 2003, KLA leaders formed RTK as a separate charitable conservation organization, with a mission to preserve Kansas' ranching heritage and open spaces for future generations through the conservation of working landscapes. More information is available at [www.ranchlandtrustofkansas.org](http://www.ranchlandtrustofkansas.org).

#### **About The Nature Conservancy**

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. Since 1951 the Conservancy has protected more than 117 million acres of land and works in all 50 states and more than 30 countries. Visit The Nature Conservancy on the Web at [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org). Learn more about The Nature Conservancy in Kansas at [www.nature.org/kansas](http://www.nature.org/kansas).

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