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### **New Panhandle wind farm helps Tech**

*By Joshua Hull | AVALANCHE-JOURNAL*

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Wind researchers at Texas Tech will soon have a new way to get hands-on training, thanks to the Department of Energy.

According to a release from the university, \$28 million of President Barack Obama's \$9.9 billion energy budget will go to the creation of the Pantex Renewable Project, a wind farm outside of Amarillo. As a research partner, Tech will have full access to the facility that will become nation's largest wind energy laboratory.

The project is a major step in Obama's goal to transform 25 percent of America's energy supply to renewable sources, something Tech Chancellor Kent Hance said the university is proud to be a part of.

"This will be huge in helping the Department of Energy accomplishing that," Hance said, adding researchers would focus on how to store renewable energy for later use.

Tech, which offers the only wind energy doctoral program in the country, also will use the facility to focus on maximizing the efficiency of turbine placement in hopes for creating a model for new wind farms to come.

The project is scheduled to be completed by 2012 and will provide power for the nearby Plantex Plant while serving as a research facility.

Initial funding calls for a 10-megawatt to 15-megawatt wind farm, but future plans hope to create a 75-megawatt facility by the time construction is completed if funding is available.

Tech will work with the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, the National Renewable Energy Lab and the Wind Alliance during the development of the project.

Andy Swift, director of the Tech's wind science program, said in a statement that the project will provide invaluable information that will take the U.S. a step closer to achieving energy independence.

"The use of a large scale wind farm for research and for workforce development is absolutely critical in providing answers to many of the key challenges facing the wind power industry," Swift said.



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