



Windpower 2009: Focus on the Burgeoning Wind Power Industry

By Kimberly Rightmer, CAEDA

Thousands flocked to Chicago the week of May 4 to attend one of the largest wind conference and exhibitions in the world. Windpower 2009, sponsored by the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), was actually three different events in one. The first, and most widely attended, was the exhibition show, consisting of 1,280 displays by companies in the wind industry and businesses offering supporting services.

It is estimated that more than 23,000 people attended the show. The displays were diverse and many were quite incredible. From futuristic 3-D films to 30 foot tall models, they did not cease to amaze.

The second portion of the show was the daily conference sessions held in rooms off the exhibition hall. Speakers, such as Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and T. Boone Pickens, addressed a variety of issues relating to wind energy policy and politics and industry trends.

The third event was held primarily for AWEA's Board of Directors and Committees to meet and discuss the future of the industry and determine what new strategies are needed to keep the industry's healthy growth curve on track.

Wyoming was well represented at both the conference and exhibition. The Wyoming Business Council and Wyoming Infrastructure Authority shared a booth. Fifteen individuals from throughout the state volunteered to work the booth and provide information, answer questions, and promote Wyoming's excellent business climate. Kim Rightmer, CAEDA Economic Development Coordinator, and Megan Graham, Casper College Electronics Technology Instructor, represented Casper throughout the week.

In addition, many Wyoming businesses sent representatives to both the show and conferences. Some of the Casper area companies at the expo included True Companies, Westech/Wotco, Granite Peak Development, Energy Transportation, TriStar Constructors, McMurry Ready Mix and CTRAN.

For CAEDA, the wind turbine industry is a top economic development priority. Casper's manufacturing base is well suited to the industry – which offers extraordinary growth potential, job creation, industry diversification and high wage levels. Natrona County offers companies distinct advantages such as a strong, reliable source of wind, proximity to



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regional markets and supplies, available access to airport, rail and highway systems, and skilled workforce. Having a presence at Windpower 2009 enabled CAEDA to emphasize these benefits to a receptive target and learn more about an industry that will no doubt have a strong economic affect on Casper/Natrona County.



Windpower 2009 was held in the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago.