

“Mark this day on your calendar”



The Governor Arrives at WindHub



WindHub Substation



Hal Romanowitz and Randy Hoyle

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Southern California Edison employees and dignitaries gathered at the new Windhub substation May 4 to celebrate the completion of Phase 1 of the massive Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project - and to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing a vision become reality.

“This is the future,” California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said to the windblown guests at the substation control building on Oak Creek Road in Mojave near CalPortland Cement Co.

“This is what I envisioned when California introduced the most ambitious climate legislation.” Wind, solar, geothermal and bio-fuel energy are available in abundance in this region, he said, “But there was one thing missing - transmission. That's what we're celebrating today.

“If you can't deliver energy to homes and factories and businesses, it's nothing. It's like having no planes, trucks or trains. Delivery is the most important.

“That why TRTP is so important to California and everyone in America who wants renewable energy.”

The completion of Phase 1, he said, is a great accomplishment. “And it's just the beginning.”

Commissioner Philip Moeller of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission compared the completion of Phase 1 to the driving of the ceremonial “Golden Spike” at Promontory Point, Utah Territory, May 10, 1869, to join two railroads in a transcontinental connection.

“The future is going to expand only more brightly,” Moeller said. “This is a success story because the governor had the courage to embrace energy issues.”

“Mark this day on your calendar,” said Yakout Mansour, president and CEO, California Independent System Operator.

“When you look back, you can say, 'We were part of it.'”

Ten years ago, he said, the world learned from California what not to do.

“Today, it learns what to do and how to do it.”

Mansour said there are several interpretations of the Native American word “Tehachapi,” and he prefers the meaning, “the windy place.”

He praised the collaboration of all the agencies involved in expediting the project.

Green only

The Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project is the first power line in California to be built exclusively for the collection and delivery of renewable energy.

The completed three segments are capable of carrying 700 megawatts to the end users (“the load,” in Edison-speak) in Los Angeles, said Theodore Craver, Jr., chairman, president and CEO of Edison International.

“When it's done, it will carry 4,500 megawatts -- that equals enough renewable energy to power three million homes,” Craver said.

The project required innovative funding, Craver said, and “The result is here as we celebrate renewable energy flowing from here to Los Angeles.”

The transmission line consists of more than 250 miles of new and upgraded high-voltage transmission facilities.

When complete, the project will extend from Eastern Kern County to the city of Ontario in San Bernardino County.

Phase 1 includes segment 1 that runs through the Angeles National Forest; segment 2 that goes through a portion of the Antelope Valley; and segment 3A that runs from the Antelope Valley to Windhub in Mojave.

A short leg, 3B, will provide the northern terminus of the line with a substation called Highwind, to be located at the east end of Tehachapi Valley. Construction at that substation is in the grading stage.

The Windhub substation, which can be seen on the south side of Oak Creek road just east of the cement plant, is half built out.

Hard work

“It's the culmination of 10 years of hard work by local wind energy to get this to happen,” said Ed Duggan, executive vice president of Oak Creek Energy Systems.

“The lack of transmission was the big holdup. Now we have that breakthrough.”

Duggan said the local wind energy businesses knew it would come eventually, but “It took until 2005 to get any real traction. The right things came together politically. There was more heightened awareness of global warming and energy security.”

The transmission line means that the big Terra-Gen wind project can continue to grow.

“It means investment in wind can continue,” said Randy Hoyle, vice president and head of wind development for Terra-Gen.

Terra-Gen began construction on its first phase 150-megawatt project in March and it will be completed in the first quarter of 2011, Hoyle said.

“We anticipate connecting to Windhub in the third quarter this year,” Hoyle said, for testing.

Hoyle said Terra-Gen will start construction on a 570-megawatt phase next month, in June 2010, and it will be complete in the second quarter of 2011.

Terra-Gen will build its own substation to collect power on the corner of Oak Creek Road and Tehachapi-Willow Springs road on CalPortland land and will build a transmission line from there to Edison's Windhub.

