

## Wind energy firm targets N.B. locations

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MONCTON - The future seems bright for community-owned wind farms in New Brunswick, as a European energy corporation is soon to announce details on a number of new wind projects.

Preneal Canada, whose Canadian subsidiary is based in Moncton, is in the process of developing wind energy projects around the province that will be 30 per cent locally owned.

"It's their farm, their backyard and it's very important because this is where they live and it provides them with wealth and for future long-term wealth," said company president Christian Monod.

Preneal Canada is currently planning development of a minimum of 800 megawatts of community wind projects throughout the province, with an estimated initial capital investment of \$1.7 billion.

Monod says the 30 per cent local co-ownership is expected to generate direct and after-tax benefits of approximately \$2-billion during the first 25 year operating period of the wind farms. Included in the benefits will be approximately 1,000 temporary and 300 permanent jobs.

The wind farms are modelled on those in use in European countries such as Denmark and Germany, which have rejuvenated the energy industry in Europe over the past 15 to 20 years. The projects will be the first locally co-owned energy projects to be developed in Atlantic Canada.

Monod says they aren't ready to announce exact locations of wind farms, but the projects will be scattered around the province.

"It's a bit early to say, but you can imagine that New Brunswick has good wind on the east side," he said. "We prefer to let the communities announce or share what they want to. We are here to help the communities."

Monod and other members of Preneal were in Caraquet Tuesday answering community questions and getting feedback for a proposed 200 megawatt wind farm.

Preneal also recently announced the appointment of Daniel LeBlanc as its Atlantic Canada project director. LeBlanc, a former Petitcodiac Riverkeeper and spokesman for

the Atlantic Canada Energy Coalition, will be working with communities to identify wind farm sites and develop a model for local co-ownership.

"The role of a developer is to bring as much information as possible to the communities, where the wind farms are going to take place so people can make the best informed decisions," LeBlanc said.

LeBlanc will also work towards setting up the mandate of the community foundations that will own five per cent shares of each project. Preneal hopes the foundation will be able to support things such as arts and culture, environment and social development.

"Sometimes wind developments can go very badly, with the community feeling alienated with the projects and there's no reason why we should create that type of industry in the province," he said.

Preneal has informed energy minister Jack Keir that they will not participate in the province's request for proposals (RFP) process, which seeks bids from many companies and typically chooses the proposal with the lowest offer. It is a process that Monod says is "totally killing the industry", by rewarding those companies with the lowest bid rather than those with the highest community impact.

His company, which has wind farm projects in Spain, Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Mexico, will only participate in community-based wind projects that fully engage the community as co-owners, Monod said.

"For us it's common business, daily business. We have done this for 15 years, but it is something that will look new here."