

Wind Power Making Headway in Texan Oil Country

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By Chuck Marvin

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"When you think of Texas and energy, green alternatives are probably the last thing that comes to mind.

But the land of big trucks and big oil is emerging as the leader in wind energy, an alternative technology that could become an important power source.

Last week, the state awarded a Louisiana company the right to build large wind farms in the Gulf of Mexico through what was the nation's first competitive lease auction for the generation of offshore wind energy.

The company, Wind Energy Systems Technology, or WEST, will pay Texas a minimum of \$132 million over 30 years for the rights to four tracts totaling more than 73,000 acres. In a best-case scenario, Texas could get as much as \$433 million during that time.

The leases stipulate that the wind farms will ultimately produce at least 250 megawatts of power per tract, according to Jim Suydam, press secretary for the Texas General Land Office. That's enough to supply 300,000 homes with electricity. "

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