

## Indiana's News Center Fort Wayne, Indiana

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# In Your Corner: Wind Farm Debate Heats Up

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By Ryan Elijah  
June 17, 2011

Seven months have passed since we met a group of Whitley County residents concerned about the impact a proposed wind farm. The group is now more organized and calls themselves Whitley County Concerned citizens. They've visited communities with turbines like Benton County and have spoken with many others. They still have major concerns about property values and health effects and many feel, if the wind farm comes in, they'll be moving out

"if these windmills do come in, we will move for sure. I'm not going to put my family through the health issues", said Whitley County resident Chad Shearer.

"even if I lose money, I'm going to have to sell, it basically ruins the whole purpose of my move here", said Jake Sherman of the turbines planned next to his property.

The closest wind farm you'll find in the Fort Wayne area is just a short drive on US 30, just across the state line. Here in Northwest Ohio you can see over 50 wind turbines behind me. Today they are testing those in anticipation of putting this new wind farm online.

"it's actually scary, you start shaking a little bit when you see that something that big is going to be next to your home", said Shearer of the Blue Creek Wind Farm.

The 175 turbine farm will be the largest in Ohio. It has units in both Paulding and Van Wert Counties and is expected to be operational later this year. After we heard from a Wisconsin man that said the noise had ruined his quiet life, we wanted to listen to the new turbines that were being tested.

From about 1000 feet away we weren't able to hear the turbine over the sound of a bulldozer, but the units were only being tested and not producing energy. Adding to the debate is the use of federal stimulus money, Wind Capital Group, received 107-

million dollars last fall, while Spanish energy giant Iberdrola has received hundreds of millions for their projects, including Ohio.

For now the Whitley County wind farm is facing a stiff breeze, the planning department has hired a consultant and they're planning another meeting in July, but action isn't expected until late Fall.

With wind farms awarding approximately 7-thousand dollars per unit annually, this is an issue that can divide neighbors.

"I have lost a relationship. It very hard to convince people when they are shown by the wind companies the hundreds of thousands of dollars they're going to make", said Caroline Dennis of Whitley County.

A Monroeville home located across the street from the farm now has over 50 turbines essentially in its front yard, but since they're not on their property they receive nothing from the company. Currently there are no Federal or State regulations, which only complicates a complex issue.

The Whitley County Concerned Citizens are presenting a public presentation and discussion next week. The group is bringing in a college professor to discuss the tax issues with the proposed wind farm, along with a family from Dekalb, Illinois to share how their lives have been impacted by the turbines.

WCCC Public Discussion

Tuesday, June 21

6:00 P.M.

Indian Springs Middle School

Columbia City

[www.wcccitizens.com](http://www.wcccitizens.com)

[www.windcapitalgroup.com/Home.aspx](http://www.windcapitalgroup.com/Home.aspx)