

# Buffalo Co. now has wind-power regulations

Posted: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 3:30 pm | Updated: 12:41 pm, Wed Apr 14, 2010.

By BETSY FRIEDRICH Hub Staff Writer | 0 comments

KEARNEY — Wind-powered electricity generation will now be allowed in Buffalo County with a special-use permit.

The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors approved amendments to the county's zoning regulations in a regular meeting Tuesday morning to allow wind turbines in agricultural and ag-residential zoning after obtaining the permit.

The board also added definitions of the terms "generator housing," "wind farm" and "wind-powered generator" to the zoning regulations.

The wind-power amendments were a recommendation of the Buffalo County Planning and Zoning Commission, which has been discussing wind power since last summer.

Several members of the commission attended the Wind Power 2009 Conference Nov. 9-10 in Kearney, and the commission had work sessions in July, November and January to draw up rules limiting the size and capacity of the generators.

Deputy County Attorney Andy Hoffmeister said Tuesday the commission will continue to discuss turbine height and power limitations. But for now, the changes will allow the county to address individual zoning requests for wind turbines.

In other business, Buster Beckenhauer of Beckenhauer Construction said plans for the second phase of the new Buffalo County Justice Center should be complete by Friday.

Now that the county's new jail is complete, the old jail on the southwest side of the courthouse will be demolished to make room for new courtrooms, offices for the county and district court and judges' chambers.

Beckenhauer said the county will be ready to accept bids for the jail's demolition in May.

Sheriff Neil Miller said before the former jail is demolished, his staff will salvage locks and keys that are valued at approximately \$30,535. He said the type of lock used in the old jail is common in many jails around the country, but is no longer manufactured, so the locks can be sold for parts.

Miller also said the county is working to hire a company to electronically scan and archive the jail's paper files. He said there are between 1 million and 2 million pieces of paper to be scanned.

Also Tuesday, the board approved bids for three major roads projects.

Blessing Construction of Kearney will rebuild and widen one mile of 11th Street west from the Kea West intersection for \$1.78 million. The city of Kearney will pay 60 percent of the project cost.

Blessing will also pave about half a mile of Imperial Avenue north from Highway 30 to the entrance of Kearney Raceway Park for \$254,712.

Vontz Paving of Hastings will pave two miles of 17th Avenue north from Highway 40 for \$841,417.

The 11th Street and Imperial Avenue projects will be funded by the sale of Recovery Zone Bonds issued by the county.

The tax-exempt bonds are part of the federal stimulus program and can be used for municipality-backed projects. The federal government will pay up to 45 percent of the interest.

The bonds will also pay for paving 56th Street between Avenue N and Airport Road. Also Tuesday the board approved renaming the half-mile of Imperial Avenue between Highway 30 and Kearney Raceway Park to Thunder Road. Raceway Park asked for the name change and there were no objections in a public hearing Tuesday from residents on the road. Miller said both names will be used in the county's 911 system.