

Blowback from one windy device

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http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/newssun/news/selle/1666315,5_4_WA15_SELLE_S1-090715.article

A little over four years ago, now-disgraced Gov. Rod Blagojevich called for a major investment in wind energy in Illinois.

Said his Hairness then: "Our goal is to have 3,000 megawatts of wind power up and running by 2012. That's enough power for one million households. That's good for the environment and it's good for our economy."

Blago's idea, which one thinks President Obama swiped some of for his green-revolution plan, was to be a deep breath of fresh air for us -- literally. New wind and other clean energy alternatives would bring jobs and economic prosperity.

Clean wind power, along with solar, would displace the ills of old, fossil-fueled power plants. We would have less air pollution, fewer ozone action days; cases of asthma would disappear from the prairies of Illinois, lifted by gentle zephyrs. In summer, we would bask in the glow of a butterscotch sun.

After all, who doesn't want non-polluting energy sources? Although it sounded good, the futurama plan is likely gathering dust in new Gov. Pat Quinn's office in Springfield.

I'll wager some folks in the old Copeland Manor portion of Libertyville thought four years ago Blago's green wave was the way to go, that wind power could help in some small way reduce the nation's energy dependence on fossil fuels.

That was until they noticed a 120-foot-tall wind turbine rising 250 feet from their back yards.

But there it is, a bright-white propeller which, when spinning, generates enough power to run two homes, according to Aldridge Electric, which installed the device for its headquarters. For the time being, the alternative energy source has been shut down as homeowners off Rockland Road seek a permanent restraining order against its operation.

It's not like this windmill was plopped in the middle of the flat fields of upstate Lee County, where there are several windfarms, including one with 63 turbines. The one in Libertyville was plunked down right behind single-family homes.

And the homeowners are not happy. Nor, I suspect would most of us.

At the same time, none of us are powering our computers with kerosene generators, trudging to the Des Plaines River to pound our clothes on rocks or rushing to sign up for solar-powered refrigerators. We're energy gluttons and have been for some time.

For the Libertyville residents in the shadow of the Aldridge wind turbine, the answer to having green energy in their community is not blowing in the wind. This isn't the cry of NIMBYs. It's already in their back yards.

This skirmish is the opening blast on where to site wind turbines in the future. One suggestion: Not in anybody's back yard.