

## geoAMPS working with wind industry toward ambitious goal

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May 07, 2013 | 0 Comments



The American Wind Energy Association Windpower 2013 conference is under way in Chicago, and there is plenty of enthusiasm and optimism in the air. That is not surprising, considering the phenomenal growth the industry has experienced over the past year. All of us at geoAMPS share that enthusiasm.

Forty-two percent of all energy installed in the U.S. in 2012 was wind. Total electric capacity from wind now exceeds 60 gigawatts.

geoAMPS applauds comments from Gabriel Alonso, incoming chair of the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), to kick off AWEA Windpower 2013. Like Mr. Alonso, the dedicated staff here at geoAMPS believes that 8,000 megawatts of new wind energy capacity each year in the U.S. is achievable.

Technological advancements in turbine construction and in development and ongoing operation of wind farms are helping move wind energy down the path to becoming the most competitive source of electricity.

altAMPS is a powerful software product offered by geoAMPS that improves the efficiency of wind farm operation. That, in turn, makes wind energy more competitive.

Yogesh Khandelwal, President and CEO of geoAMPS, discussed "Leveraging Technology to Advance Windpower" at his poster presentation during the Windpower conference from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7.

AWEA reports that these popular presentations attract a large audience each year with a broad scope of information presented by some of the leading researchers and business leaders in the global wind industry. Poster presentations showcase research studies, practical problem-solving efforts and innovative programs in a visual format.

For his presentation, Yogesh focused on a major pain point in managing a wind farm – dealing with ongoing payment obligations. Without effective technology, wind companies must complete manual calculations that are labor intensive, with multiple staff members involved each month. Despite this commitment of company resources, payments still can be late or wrong, creating even more problems for the company. Web-based software supported by a centralized database provides an effective solution.

There are many variables in meeting ongoing payments for a wind farm. Lease and royalty payments go out to multiple landowners. The amounts might have to be divided into percentages for the multiple owners of one parcel. Some payments are adjusted by the Consumer Price Index, others by the Gross Domestic Product Implicit Price. Some payments are adjusted by simple interest, others compounded annually.

Landowners can be individuals, married couples, corporations or trusts. The landowner may change address. Married couples get divorced. Ownership can change, revert to an estate or go into probate upon a landowner's death. Corporations are bought out or close.

To address these many factors, wind companies have resorted to various means with varying degrees of success. Many work from spreadsheets. Some still work from paper. In either case, the information must be input manually through each payment cycle. Many calculations must be done quickly, but the information on spreadsheets can be erroneous or inconsistent. It is complicated and time-consuming to track all of the triggers that determine the timeline for individual payments.

Tight deadlines and manual tweaking of so many adjustments can result in errors or slow the payment process. Missing payments or issuing incorrect amounts mean major headaches for the wind company, and make landowners unhappy.

Fortunately, there is Web-based software that provides a solution to wind companies. This software improves the accuracy and efficiency of meeting payment obligations by providing lease management, automatic payment reminders, payment tracker, royalty calculator, and payment scheduler capabilities. The royalty-payment calculator automates the process of meeting development, construction, landowner compensation and other types of payments, despite the complexities of these calculations and the varied timelines.

This automated, technology-driven answer produces accuracy, consistency, low time commitment, cost savings, improved compliance and maintaining payment schedules.

In his presentation at the AWEA conference, Yogesh explained how, with advancements in software and other technological tools, there is an opportunity for wind organizations to enjoy greater efficiency. By leveraging Web-based software, which supports mobile technology and geographical information system (GIS) mapping, all wind project data can be centralized and all workflows and wind farm-related tasks made more efficient. Existing data can be combined into a collaborative environment, speeding the completion of wind projects and facilitating wind farm operations through the siting, planning, land acquisition, construction and operational phases.

With new technological capabilities, the ambitious goal stated at Windpower 2013 by Mr. Alonso is achievable. The wind energy industry will have the ability to add to the growing electric capacity from this clean, renewable resource.

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