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Wind a Growing Source of Energy in United States

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In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in electricity generated by wind. The American Wind Energy Association reports the wind industry has added 35 percent of all new electric generating capacity in the U.S. over the past five years, second only to natural gas. The increased capacity of wind is more than added nuclear and coal capacity combined. During the first three quarters of 2012, 4,728 megawatts (MW) of wind capacity was installed, bringing total U.S. capacity to 51,630 MW. Today, there are more than 40,000 wind turbines in the U.S.

Canada is aggressively increasing its wind capacity too. More than 1 million homes in Canada are powered by electricity provided through wind.

While it is easy to see and be impressed with the results, it is no simple task to develop and operate a wind farm. It requires a great deal of planning, management of the project during construction, and ongoing operational tasks.

Wind industry officials tell our geoAMPS team that their number one pain point in developing and operating wind farms is meeting ongoing payment obligations. Absent a good strategy and the right technology, meeting those obligations can be a struggle.

Consider the process of developing a wind farm. Once a suitable location is determined, both in terms of availability of wind and proximity to transmission lines, the company must acquire the necessary right of way. Contracts and lease agreements must be finalized. Permits must be obtained. The electricity anticipated from the wind farm must be sold. A great deal of effort goes into the development phase even before construction begins. After the wind farm is built and operating, the company must ensure ongoing lease and royalty payments are issued accurately and on schedule.

Meeting payment obligations, throughout the stages of developing, constructing and managing a wind farm, can be complex. Property ownership can change. The property owner might change addresses. Absent an established format for landowner information, there can be differences in how that information is presented in the wind company's database.

Missing payments or issuing an incorrect amount can disrupt the wind farm project. It can create ill will with landowners and contractors. Not having the proper strategy and tools for proper management of ongoing payment obligations can slow a wind project down or bring it to a grinding halt.

Wind energy companies employ various means to meet ongoing payment obligations. Many work off of spreadsheets where information can be erroneous or inconsistent. Others work from computer calendars. Some even work from paper. In these systems, information must be input manually. Emails with supervisors or payment administrators must be exchanged. It's a clunky, inefficient process that is slow and wrought with the possibility of error.

Technology developed by geoAMPS makes it possible to manage and conduct ongoing payment obligations through one cohesive software system. All landowner and payment information is brought into the software, and the system manages the necessary ongoing payments automatically. Tasks related to ongoing payments that once took two weeks to complete can now be done in minutes.

Part of the geoAMPS product line, altAMPS is tailored for alternative energy projects. It offers efficiency in the maintenance and operations of existing alternative energy infrastructure. The software is filled with time-saving tools such as lease management, met tower management, royalty payment calculator, bulk update, auto reminders, payment tracker and scheduler, workflow and import-export capabilities. Its robust, configurable framework provides compressed sequence time and complies with each alternative energy company's unique project needs. Plus, it is paperless. With altAMPS, companies can realize process efficiency, error elimination and measured cost savings.

With wind energy capacity growing dramatically, the need for efficiency in managing and operating wind farms will only increase. Making ongoing payments is an aspect of doing business that will increase, too, as the number of wind farms grow.

Meeting those obligations is major pain point in the industry today. With the right technology, however, it does not have to be.

About geoAMPS

Located in Powell, geoAMPS is a technology company developing software for managing land rights and infrastructure assets for its global customers. geoAMPS off-the-shelf products have been developed through collaboration between industry and technology experts. With ongoing commitment to partnerships and investments in research and development, geoAMPS creates comprehensive industry-specific solutions that are incredibly powerful and intuitive to meet the demanding needs of business.