



*Bringing Oregonians Together*

## **Union County Wind Energy**



### **Timeline**

May 2010 – Ongoing

### **Region**

Eastern Oregon

### **Participants**

Union County; City of Union; Antelope Ridge Wind Energy Project LLC.

### **Project Lead**

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### **Facilitators**

Chris Moore, CDR Associates; Debra Nudelman, Kearns and West

### **Background**

In 2009, Antelope Ridge Wind Energy Project LLC (Antelope Ridge) submitted to the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) a Notice of Intent to build a 300 megawatt wind-powered electric generating facility in Union County, Oregon, near the Cities of Union and La Grande. Approval in the form of a Site Certificate from the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) is required before energy facility construction.

At the initial request of Antelope Ridge, Oregon Consensus conducted an assessment involving the City of Union, the developer, Union County, ODOE, project landowners, and members of a local citizens' group opposed to the project, to determine whether a collaborative process would be an appropriate way to address issues related to siting of the proposed project.

Based on the assessment, Oregon Consensus recommended a collaborative process and has since facilitated discussions to help the parties understand each other's interests and concerns about the proposed project's effect on property values, tourism, viewshed, and health as well as on its economic impacts. A key goal of the collaborative process was to reach agreement on a draft proposed Strategic Investment Program (SIP) that meets the interests of all parties. A SIP is a state tax program that benefits county residents by keeping more revenue and fees in the county than with a traditional tax structure.

### **Issues and Challenges**

The siting of energy facilities is a complex process that involves the consideration of economic and other impacts of such projects on nearby communities and local governments. The challenge during any energy development process is to find ways to meet diverse stakeholder interests in the event the facility is approved under state law and constructed. The goal of the process is to develop a positive negotiating relationship that permits the parties to understand each other's interests effectively.

### **Results**

The mediation is ongoing. The parties have reached agreement on a draft revised SIP agreement between Union County and Antelope Ridge that ensures that \$2 million will go directly to the City of Union if the project is built in full.