


WIND power woes

In the Summer 2009 issue of *Municipal Leader*, we profiled a municipality taking great strides in the use of green energy. The RM of Morris already had a new public service garage using geothermal heating and cooling. The new building offered a perfect opportunity to take this green outlook one step further by using vertical axis wind

turbines to fully power the geothermal system. Working with Global Wind Group based in Winnipeg, and sharing the cost of the project with Manitoba Conservation's Sustainable Development Innovations Fund (SDIF), the RM of Morris public service garage in Rosenort became the first building in Canada to have multiple roof-mounted wind turbines.

Each of the three vertical axis wind turbines was designed to generate 1.2 kW and be mounted on the rooftop, eliminating the cost of a pole. However, the municipality and Global Wind Group were forced to re-think the project after some unexpected problems. While the turbines produce energy as promised, on windy days they also roar like an airport and cause the building and its contents to vibrate.

The problem was likely caused by the building's corrugated tin roof picking up the vibrations from the wind turbines and amplifying them. The building's large size (80 x 220 feet) and construction (wood covered by metal, with no teleposts supporting it) further amplified the noise, in effect causing it to act like a speaker box.

Global Wind Group admits the roof-mounted turbines would work better on a flat-roofed building, but believes this is just the first generation and small vertical-axis turbines have a future. In the meantime, the RM will revert to pole-mounted turbines and still reap the energy-saving benefits. While the turbines are disconnected at this time, the RM plans to install them in spring once the ground thaws, at the suppliers cost. 



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Editor's note: The Winter, 2010 issue of The Municipal Leader contained an error on p. 16. In the photo caption, vice-presidents Shirley Kalyniuk and Roger Wilson were identified incorrectly. Kalyniuk is the Urban Vice-President and Wilson is the Rural Vice-President. We regret the error.