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Illinois Wind Working Group Highlighted in Wind Powering America Evaluation Report
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Illinois State University's Center for Renewable Energy has led the Illinois Wind Working Group (IWWG) for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Wind Powering America (WPA) initiative since 2006. An independent review of the WPA initiative highlights the Illinois group's achievements and cites the partnership with Illinois State University as a particular strength.

The 243-page report, *Impact and Process Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Energy's Wind Powering America Initiative*, prepared by Navigant Consulting, states the IWWG is "perceived as an objective source of creditable information about wind-related issues." Evaluators noted that respondents said the IWWG provided "organized and structured meetings with an inclusive open-door policy, and were able to assemble a diverse group of wind power stakeholders who could exchange information and address key issues."

Some respondents specifically mentioned IWWG's partnership with Illinois State as "a key contributor to the group's effectiveness, pointing specifically to the group's stability over the years and the added credibility from having an academic institution involved in the group's research activities and reports." Stakeholders also stated that the WPA and IWWG's "positive influence on the Illinois wind market stemmed largely from their role as an objective source of credible information." It was also noted that the Illinois group "initiated efforts to provide information for and raise awareness among landowners."

The Department of Energy established WPA to educate, engage, and enable critical stakeholders to make informed decisions about how wind energy contributes to the U.S. electricity supply. IWWG was designed to communicate wind opportunities honestly and

objectively; to interact with various stakeholders at the local, state, regional and national levels; and to promote economic development of wind energy in the state.

“Illinois ranks fourth in the country for installed wind energy capacity,” said David Loomis, who leads the Illinois Wind Working Group. “In order to keep new jobs coming from wind energy, we need to see important state and federal policies in place. Our IWWG conferences, workshops, and forums provide answers to issues concerning wind energy in Illinois.” Loomis is the director of the Center for Renewable Energy and executive director of the Institute for Regulatory Policy Studies at Illinois State. He is also a professor of economics and was part of the team that designed the nation’s first undergraduate program in renewable energy at Illinois State.

IWWG is currently working with other organizations across Illinois for the development of an All Renewables Conference in July 2014 in Normal. More information on the group may be found at www.RenewableEnergy.IllinoisState.edu/wind/.

The Center for Renewable Energy at Illinois State University was approved by the Illinois Board of High Education in August, 2008. The Center has three major functional areas: supporting the renewable energy major at Illinois State University; serving the Illinois renewable energy community by providing information to the public; and encouraging applied research on renewable energy at Illinois State and through collaborations with other universities.

Wind Powering America is a regionally-based collaborative initiative to increase the nation’s domestic energy supply by promoting the use of wind energy technology, to increase rural economic development, protect the environment, and enhance the nation’s energy security. WPA provides technical support and educations and outreach materials regarding utility-scale development and small wind electric systems.

The full evaluation report by Navigant Consulting is online at www.WindPoweringAmerica.gov/filter_detail.asp?itemid=3886.