

Dansville Wind Towers

4M provides temp home for UPC turbines

By JEFF MILLER

Genesee Country Express

DANSVILLE—By the time the second truck had arrived on Main Street, it was old news. People stood outside of their businesses watching in groups, traffic was held up for blocks, and there was at least one near scrape as the trucks had to make a wide turn onto Ossian Street. But within a couple of hours, the five bases to a wind turbine made their way successfully from Canada to their holding place in the yard of the 4M Complex on the afternoon of June 5.

The surprise arrival no doubt made pedestrians and motorists wonder what in the world those large cylindrical-shaped objects were. Once locals found out they were wind turbines, rumors about Cohocton started circulating immediately. The Cohocton UPC Outreach Office said that the towers were indeed ordered by the same development company (UPC Wind Management out of Newton, Mass.), but they were not for the Cohocton project.

At first, the UPC Cohocton

office thought that they were ordered specifically for Prattsburgh, but after speaking directly with UPC Wind senior project manager Lawrence Mott out of Bristol, Vt., it was learned that because permits for the Prattsburgh project have not yet been granted, the turbines would end up at the first available site within the New York and New England area.

The towers that are currently being housed at 4M came from the General Electric (G.E.) Company facility Quebec, one of the closest manufacturing facilities for the Northeast region. Although the order for the turbines was placed a year ago, the turbines are hot off the production line.

Due to demand, it's not unusual for turbines to arrive a year later, Mott said. Since he is try-

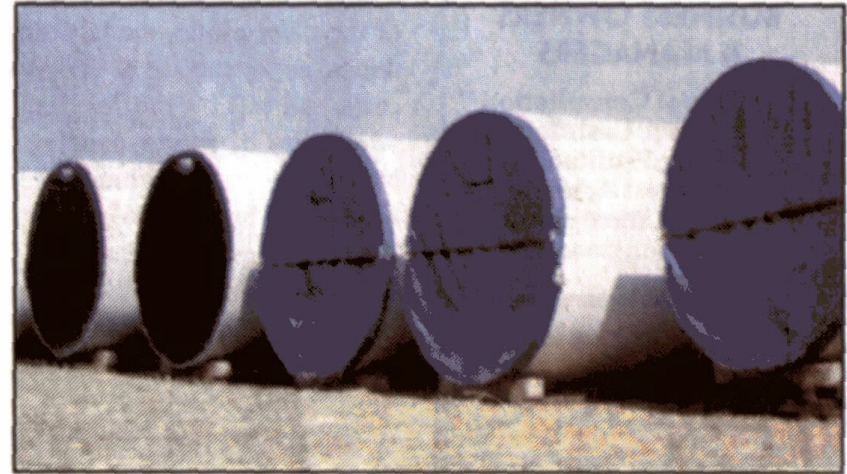


PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER

Wind tower base sections at 4M Complex.

ing to be proactive about purchasing turbines, Mott decided to have these bought, stored and ready so they can be placed as need allowed. He already has turbines ready and stored for the Cohocton project.

However, depending on the time frame of the Cohocton Town and Planning Boards' ap-

provals of the permits, along with decisions from a recent lawsuit and a Public Service Commission hearing still pending with Steuben County judges, the Clipper turbines for Cohocton could also end up at another site if need

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arises by fall. Mott said that the Clipper turbines would not be housed at 4M. Instead, they are currently being stored at the factory in Iowa.

As far as the G.E. turbines are concerned, "the equipment's gonna be rolling in a few weeks," Mott said. All turbines will be coming into Dansville from Quebec. The turbine sections will be between 50 and 70 feet long, and when put together, each turbine will be more than 260 feet tall. Mott said that 4M will be storing approximately 30 turbines for UPC. Approximately 150 pieces will roll into Dansville at a rate of about five turbines per week. Mott said that the June 5 arrival "is going to be the highest volume that we are ever going to hit."

Because I-390 has some overpasses that are too low for the base sections to go under, the Department of Transportation (DOT) required the trucks to be rerouted onto State Route 63 from Batavia, resulting in the recent Main Street spectacle. Besides the bases, the rest of the pieces of the turbines should fit well along I-390, Mott said. An alternate route so bases will not have to use Main Street in the near future is under consideration.

Since 4M has a railroad that runs to the plant, Mott said that he considered hauling the cargo via train. But "trains were tough for coordination and logistics," he said.

Mott was made aware of the 4M facility through a Southern Tier-based heavy hauling trucking company. The company previously serviced both Foster Wheeler and UPC. The trucking company suggested the site to UPC when they learned of the storage need.

Mott said it is likely that the turbines could be housed here for a few months. Although UPC would like to use 4M's yard on a regular basis, it all depends on the demand of future Northeast wind turbine development. Mott is currently overseeing three UPC projects in the Northeast: Prattsburgh, Cohocton and Vermont.