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CONTACT: Debbie Strand
509-962-7244

Phoenix Group to conduct economic study on wind energy project

ELLENSBURG, Wash. -- The Phoenix Economic Development Group announced today the board is undertaking an economic study to analyze the benefits of the proposed Zilkha Renewable Energy Wind Power Project. With tentative funding approval from the Office of Community, Trade and Economic Development, the Phoenix study will seek to identify the tax revenues expected to be generated to Kittitas County from Zilkha's project and impacts on surrounding property values.

On July 18, members of the Phoenix Board traveled to Wallula, Washington to tour the State Line Wind Project including nearly 400 turbines on the border of Oregon and Washington operated by a division of Florida Power and Light. The group was able to walk into the base of an operating turbine.

Ellen Howe, Phoenix chair said, "We stood at the base of a row of operating turbines talking with the project manager about the mechanics of a wind farm, the permitting process in Walla Walla County, the company's environmental studies and work with local groups including the Audubon Society, and the number of jobs created and number of local employees hired."

Board member Bill Woods said, "It was an informative fact finding mission particularly to see the colors used and hear the relatively quiet hum of the operating turbines. We appreciated the opportunity to conduct first-hand research on wind energy. It appeared to be a well-executed and designed project."

The Phoenix Group has been designated by the county as the associate development organization for the county. The group's mission is to provide leadership that stimulates business and promotes economic opportunities to support the needs of Kittitas County.

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