

# Turbine a step toward energy independence

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As the nation talks about energy in the windblast of this year's presidential election, an example of a homespun solution emerges atop a hill on former Orr Ranch property near Granby.

The pole rises 35 feet toward an autumn blue sky.

Soon, it will have a wind turbine attached with three six-foot blades — the first wind turbine erected in Grand County in roughly 30 years.

"There was a big push for this type of alternative energy to be done in the late '70s and early '80s, and then it kind of died off when the price of oil went down, and people forgot about it," said homeowner Charley Adams. Adams is the CEO of the Grand County-based business Simply Efficient.

The Adams home was built a few years ago with electric thermal storage heat that utilizes off-peak storage.

Solar photovoltaic panels keep the home's garage at 40 degrees through winter, and solar panels transfer energy to provide the home's hot water. The home also utilizes passive solar benefits.

During winter, the Adams have paid an average \$120 a month for all energy used in their 3,500 square foot tri-level.

It is hoped the new wind turbine, installed Wednesday, will supply 50-150 percent of the home's electricity once up and running.

Any surplus made will be used by other electricity consumers, and Mountain Parks Electric would reimburse the Adams for its use.

Since the home is grid-tied, Mountain Parks would supply electricity to the Adams home if the wind turbine comes up short of what is needed.

"We want to stay tied to the grid because I think it's a good way to store energy," Adams said.

Wind turbines plus installation can run from \$12,000 to \$18,000, and are suitable for property one acre or larger.

He estimates it will take about 10 years before their wind turbine has paid for itself.

"After that, it's free energy," he said.



BYRON HETZLER/SKY-HI DAILY NEWS

Charley and Lynn Adams pose with their new wind turbine generator as workers finish its installation on Wednesday near Granby.

The big question is, "What's the price of electricity going to be five years or 10 years from now?" Adams asked.

"Nobody believes it's not going to be substantially more in the future."

Rising energy costs of late even have influenced a few Grand County building owners to dust off forgotten solar capabilities and invest in getting them working again, such as James K. Pool Architects and Associates' and Stern & Newton attorneys' shared solar building in Granby, as well as the senior living solar facility in Granby.

On the Adams' property, the wind tower sits 700 feet from the house on a wind-swept hilltop on 100 acres. Cable is buried from the tower to the Adams' home, where an outdoor electricity box transfers wind power to the home's outlets.

"We're at a point now where people really get that we can't continue the way

## Finding energy solutions

Partners Charley Adams, Daimon Vilppu and Guy Larson have a Grand County-based business nine workers strong that helps consumers throughout the state find alternative energy solutions — from solar electric, wind thermal and wind energy to micro-hydro, heat pumps and ETS. The company also provides energy reviews of homes for around \$200 to \$500 to help guide residents about what solutions are possible and affordable, from efficient lightbulbs to photovoltaics and wind turbines. Simply Efficient can be reached at (970) 531-7065.

we have been," said Lynn Adams, Charley's wife.

Simply Efficient started up four years ago right at a time when consumer awareness about possible home-energy solutions started to evolve.

Beyond the Adams' home dining-room window, the Simply Efficient crew attaches cables, preparing to raise the tower.

"This is doing something about global warming in the way we can as property owners," Lynn said.

It was understood a few neighbors would be able to see the wind tower and turbine, but once it was erected, the tower appears dwarfed by the grandiose mountains beyond.

It's a small micro-step toward energy solutions that, the Adams say, is "beautiful" in their eyes.

"If people want to be energy efficient, the way we say we do, that means some things. It means things might look a little different," Lynn said. "It depends on your perspective. I think it looks great because it means free energy and less dependence on foreign oil."

Master Electrician Guy Larson, a Granby resident who owns a Prius Hybrid with Grand County license plates "Eco Guy," joined the company two years ago.

For him, the chance to own a business that improves homeowners' energy efficiency is a chance to do what's necessary for all.

But it starts at home.

"As a nation, we can't continue the way we're going," he said.

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