

Study: Iowa wind energy potential four times previous estimate

By Dave DeWitte

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Iowa could produce four times the wind energy previously thought because of improvements in wind turbine technology and more refined wind measures, a new study says.

The study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory moves Iowa

up to seventh among states in potential wind energy generation from its previous tenth place ranking. The study says wind energy could be used to generate 2.02 million gigawatt hours of electricity compared to the previous estimate of 551,000 gigawatt hours.

Larger energy turbines manufactured today are

more efficient than those made at the time of previous estimates. However, the increased estimates are partly due to today's taller wind turbines, which tap better winds at higher elevations, according to the American Wind Energy Association. The study measured winds at an elevation of 80 meters.

The study pegged the

wind energy generation of the United States at 37 million gigawatt-hours annually, more than nine times current U.S. electricity consumption. It said the challenge of developing the nation's wind energy potential is not limited to the considerable cost of installing wind turbines. It also will require extending

the transmission grid to remote areas where the turbines would be built.

Texas leads the nation in wind energy generation, but Iowa swept past California last year to rank second in the amount of wind energy it can generate.

■ Comments: (319) 398-8317; david.dewitte@gazcomm.com

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