

U.S. Wind Force announces grant recipients

News-Tribune

Posted Jan 31, 2012 @ 01:31 PM

Keyser, W.Va. —

KEYSER - The U.S. Wind Force Foundation Inc. has announced the recipients of the first round of grants from its Community Benefit Fund associated with the Pinnacle Wind Farm at NewPage.

Twenty grants ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 and totaling \$55,000 were allocated to local projects.

Thirty-nine grant applications were received and evaluated by a local allocation committee made up of nine distinguished members of the community. The Allocation Committee is chaired by Keyser resident Gary Wilson.

"I appreciate the amount of effort the Allocation Committee put into the review of grant applications," Wilson said. "They did an excellent job. We appreciate that U.S. Wind Force designed a process for allocating grant money that allowed for local decision-making."

The grant recipients, in alphabetical order, are as follows:

- Campaign for Keyser High School, \$3,000 toward the payment of the lend/lease agreement with the Mineral County Board of Education.
- Developmental Center and Workshop Inc., \$3,500, for the purchase of a high-volume shredding machine.
- Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, \$1,200 for a scholarship for a Mineral County resident.
- Elk District Ambulance Service, \$3,000 for equipment, supplies and building repair.
- Elk District Volunteer Fire Department Challenged Hunt Fund, \$750 for handicapped accessible hunting blinds at Jennings Randolph Lake.
- Elk District Volunteer Fire Company, \$5,000 for new turnout gear and rescue equipment.
- Elk Garden School PTO, \$5,000 for the installation of a quarter-mile walking track.
- Food for Thought program, \$2,000 for food distribution to needy Mineral County students.
- Fort Ashby Public Library, \$1,000 to help with repairs to the library roof.
- Fountain Volunteer Fire Company, \$2,000 for equipment to outfit a new ambulance.
- Friends of Jennings Randolph Lake Inc., \$750 for a handicapped accessible gazebo at Kalbaugh Pond.
- Keyser EMS, \$3,000 for the purchase of ambulance cots.
- Apple Alley Players, \$3,000 for the concrete project at the Larenim Park Amphitheater.

- Mineral County 4-H Leaders Association, \$5,000 for materials and labor for the bath house project at Camp Minco.
- Mineral County Family Resource Network, \$2,000 for Energy Express.
- Mineral County Historical Foundation, \$5,000 for restoration work at the Carskadon Mansion.
- New Creek Primary School, \$500 for picnic tables and the installation of pavilion concrete.
- Piedmont Library, \$5,000 for library roof replacement.
- Town of Elk Garden, \$2,500 for the installation of a town park.
- Warm the Children, \$2,000 for the annual campaign to provide warm winter clothing for area needy children.

“We are glad to see this money going to worthy community organizations. The people of Mineral County will see the benefits of this voluntary stream of funding for many years to come,” said Jim Cookman president of US Wind Force Foundation Inc.

Funding for the Foundation’s Community Benefit Fund comes from Edison Mission Energy (EME), owner and operator of Pinnacle, which was jointly developed by EME and US Wind Force.

The Pinnacle project agreed to provide \$50,000 to the Community Benefit Fund when the project reached commercial operation status, a two-part process that began in December and was completed on Jan. 13, and an additional \$20,000 each year for the life of the project. Another \$10,000 in funding was earmarked for historic preservation projects. The \$5,000 grant made to Mineral County Historical Foundation Inc., was made from the historic preservation funds, and is contingent on the recipient satisfying certain requirements of the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office. A balance of \$5,000 remains in that account for future distribution.

EME’s representative to the Foundation Board is Susan Olavarria, the company’s director of community involvement in the 14 states in which EME does business.

“Support for local organizations is core to how EME companies do business across the country, and we are pleased to begin our operations in Mineral County by supporting these groups,” said Olavarria.

“This kind of support is an important part of an overall community relations program that we will be working to develop further with local residents. We take our corporate citizenship seriously and understand that it requires ongoing dialogue with the community on a number of fronts.”

“We welcome Edison Mission Energy to Mineral County, salute its commitment to the community, and look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship,” said Cindy Pyles, president of the Mineral County Commission.

“It is really gratifying to see benefits that go well beyond jobs and tax revenue. It turns out that there are other benefits that come from hosting a wind farm like Pinnacle.”

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