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## GE turbine order won't affect Greenville job numbers

### Oilman T. Boone Pickens orders 667 wind turbines

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An order for 667 General Electric wind turbines placed by legendary oilman T. Boone Pickens doesn't immediately mean new jobs at GE's complex in Greenville, though the company's local plant eventually could help make the electricity-generating machines, a spokesman said Monday.

Mark Reilly, spokesman for GE's complex on Garlington Road, said the company hasn't decided where to build the turbines that Pickens ordered as part of plans to build the world's largest wind farm in the Texas panhandle.

Delivery of the 667 turbines isn't scheduled to take place until 2010 and 2011, Reilly noted.

"It's kind of far out there," he said. "There's no immediate impact on jobs here."

Still, he said, the order at the very least enhances job security for about 75 GE employees in Greenville who manufacture a large wind turbine part called a machine head.

"One way or another it's going to keep our wind operations here full," Reilly said.

GE also makes wind turbines or their parts in Pensacola, Fla., and Tehachapi, Calif., and two sites in Europe, Reilly said. The company's Greenville complex is headquarters for wind turbine engineering.

The order for 667, 1.5-megawatt wind turbines is part of the \$2 billion first phase of the Pampa Wind Project planned in the Texas panhandle by Mesa Power LLP, a company created by Pickens.

Mesa Power said the project would be the world's largest wind farm, eventually covering 400,000 acres and generating enough power for more than 1.3 million homes.

The announcement comes at a time when Congress is considering whether to extend tax credits for wind energy developers.

GE is lobbying for renewal of the credits and counts U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis, a Republican from Greenville, among its allies on Capitol Hill.

In a statement Thursday, Inglis linked Pickens' order to "new South Carolina jobs."

"When an oil industry leader like T. Boone Pickens places a \$2 billion order for wind turbines assembled in Greenville, this is great news in many ways," Inglis said in the statement.

Inglis said Pickens' order "shows that when we pursue our energy security with innovation and commitment, the pain at the pump gives way to new energy, new South Carolina jobs and America wins."

In a later telephone interview, Inglis said he wasn't trying to say that Pickens' order would lead to new jobs immediately at GE's plant in Greenville, but that the push for alternative energy presents job opportunities for South Carolina.

"Somebody's going to have to build those wind units, and Garlington Road isn't the only place that GE does that work, but it is a major center of excellence for them. I know from talking to their leadership team that they're very happy with Greenville," Inglis said.

Inglis said he met Wednesday in Washington with GE government relations executives and learned of the Pickens' order then.

The wind turbines, resembling giant fans, generate electricity as their blades turn in the wind. The machine head, the part that GE makes in Greenville, includes the gears, generator and motors and is mounted on a tower more than 300 feet high.

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