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Going green

By FRAN O'LEARY

Key Points

- Couple has studied wind energy for three years.
- If they qualify for grants, the payback period will be 11 years.
- They applied for a REAP grant to help pay for their turbine.

WHAT Charles Hammer and his wife, Nancy Kavazanjian, were looking for was a way to utilize renewable energy on their 1,860-acre Dodge County crop farm. The couple has studied the benefits of renewable energy for the past three years.

"We went to the Midwest Energy Fair, and that's where we first saw personal energy turbines," Nancy says. "We thought solar would be the ticket, but our farm energy assessment showed that the solar payback was 25 to 30 years. It was a lot longer than wind. We were surprised and disappointed because it's so expensive."

The payback on a wind turbine is 22 years. However, if Nancy and Charles qualify for grants for the turbine through Focus on Energy and the Renewable Energy for America Program, the payback period will be cut in half to 11 years. The REAP grant they applied for is \$20,000.

"Personal wind energy systems aren't cheap, but if you can get the grants, it really helps," Nancy says.

Gathering information

After settling on wind, Charles and Nancy did their homework.

"Charlie talked to several people and I talked to several consultants, including Mick Sagrillo, a well-known wind au-

thority who works with Renew Wisconsin, about different systems," Nancy says. "The turbine we ended up getting was actually our second choice, but was the one our wind adviser, Randy Faller, recommended. So we put our faith in him. He's putting up the same system for himself, and that was good enough for us."

Randy helped Nancy and Charles with the technical portion of their REAP grant application. He also oversaw construction of the project.

"But the main selling point is that Randy is putting in the same turbine, and we have a contract with him for maintenance because we don't want to be climbing 120 feet in the air to fix something," Charles says.

They look at the wind turbine as an investment not only in their farm, but also in something more. "If you put the money in a 401(k) or an IRA, the return isn't too good right now," Nancy says. "But this is an investment in our future and in America. This is part of the legacy we will leave our kids."

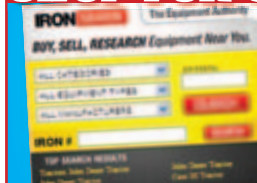
■ Read more on Page 8.



WIND INNOVATORS: Nancy Kavazanjian and Charles Hammer are building a 120-foot-tall personal wind energy system on their Dodge County farm near Beaver Dam.

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