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Wind farms draw tourists

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JOHNSTOWN, Pa., Dec. 26 (UPI) Some wind farms turn out to be lucrative tourist attractions, the Tribune-Democrat reported Saturday.

It's how you sell it and how you market yourself, said Erik Foley, director of the Renewable Energy Center at St. Francis University in Pennsylvania. We could become the clean energy capital of the world. Cambria and Somerset counties in Pennsylvania have recently experienced rapid growth in the wind market. Some officials still believe the wind farms will negatively impact their large tourism industry. Others in less popular areas hope the wind mills will become an attraction that draws crowds.

Already in Somerset County, the highest turbines in the area are helping the economy by drawing bus tours from the Pennsylvania Turnpike and groups tours of convention visitors from the nearby Seven Springs Resort.

We get an amazing number of calls and people stopping in asking for information on them, said Ron Aldom, executive director of the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce. People are extremely interested. Also, in Oklahoma and Texas there is a stretch of turbines 600 miles long where tours are given explaining the history of wind energy.

Currently, there are no definitive statistics available regarding wind energy and tourism, but the American Wind Energy Association maintains that many rural areas experience increases in tourism after wind farms were built.

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