

Base Study Could Launch Air Mobility Command Closer to Energy Independence

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SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. (AFNS) -- A renewable energy study at six installations may result in a different kind of Air Mobility Command "power projection."

Conducted by Department of Energy officials, the study will determine whether renewable energy sources, including wind farms and solar panels, could be cost effective; thus resulting in greener energy sources and less dependence on off-base providers.

AMC officials here called the study a major step toward becoming more environmentally friendly and independent.

"We expect the outcome of the study by end of this fall," said Chan Keith, a resource efficiency manager at AMC. "That would allow us to plan renewable energy projects for fiscal 2011."

The six AMC bases involved are Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.; Dover AFB, Del.; MacDill AFB, Fla.; Grand Forks AFB, N.D.; Little Rock AFB, Ark.; and McConnell AFB, Kan.

Four of the six bases will undergo general assessments. McConnell AFB will be specifically assessed for a wind turbine project, and Little Rock AFB will be considered for producing photovoltaic energy.

"So far, the most promising probable outcome of this study appears to be McConnell with wind turbine project," Mr. Keith said.

For example, the average car, driven 12,000 miles, produces 11,000 pounds of carbon emissions per year. A wind turbine could reduce carbon emissions equivalent to that produced by 931 "average" cars, he said.

If the study determines the wind turbine project for McConnell is viable, a turbine there could produce approximately 5,200 Megawatt-hours of energy per year, or 6 percent of McConnell's energy consumption, said Lt. Col. Nam Shelton, the director of AMC's energy efficiency program.

McConnell AFB could potentially place wind turbines on a nearby but separate plot of land. So there's no conflict with the mission of the base or potential radar interference issues, Mr. Keith said.

"We've taken the necessary precautions for the McConnell project by utilizing the Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration prescreening tool to make sure a project wouldn't impact the flying mission," Mr. Keith said.

The study at Little Rock AFB will determine whether it is cost effective to install solar photovoltaic materials on base that could convert sun rays into electricity.

As with a multitude of energy initiatives, AMC has already leaned forward with photovoltaic technology. Several buildings at various AMC bases already have solar panels installed, such as Joint Base McGuire-Dix-

Lakehurst, N.J.

However, the results of this study will help AMC to take a more organized approach toward establishing renewable energy, Mr. Keith said.

"What's the value in our doing this? Besides meeting our renewable energy goals through Executive Order 13233, it also helps us become more energy independent or energy secure at our bases by having that power generation on base as opposed to off base," Mr. Keith said.

The Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program will fund the study. The program supports federal agencies with implementing sound, cost-effective energy management to enhance environmental stewardship.

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