Choosing Renewable Energy for a Small Business

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New Belgium Brewing Company, Inc.

Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

A sustainable small business

Facets of sustainable business practices at New Belgium

- Waste stream reduction
- Energy and resource conservation
- Cultivating employees' desire to be active/engaged members of the company
- Community philanthropy

Some company statistics:

- Privately held, 9 years old
- 100 employees
- 1999 shipments 147,000 barrels
- 2000 philanthropy budget $147,000

How we got involved with renewable energy

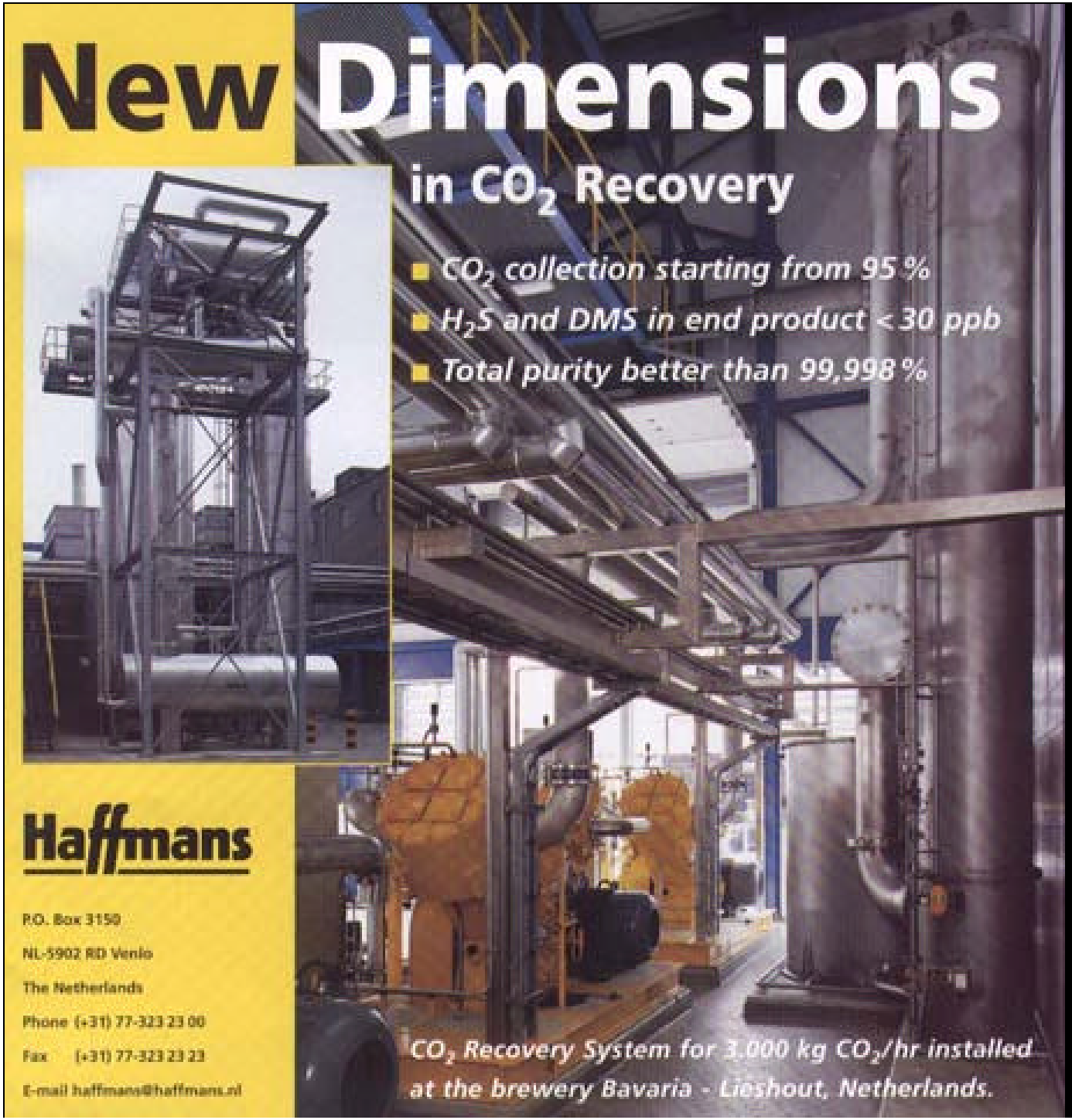
- Focusing on waste reduction/zero waste
- Searching for a viable action
- Most options were capital or engineering intensive

Major waste streams at New Belgium:

- Carbon dioxide from fermentation, and electric and steam power generation
- Spent grain 2500 T
- Glass 4300 T
- Waste water and suspended organics 10M gal

Estimated CO2 production 1998

- Fermentation byproduct 800 tonnes
- Electric power generation 1800 tonnes
- Heat energy production ??

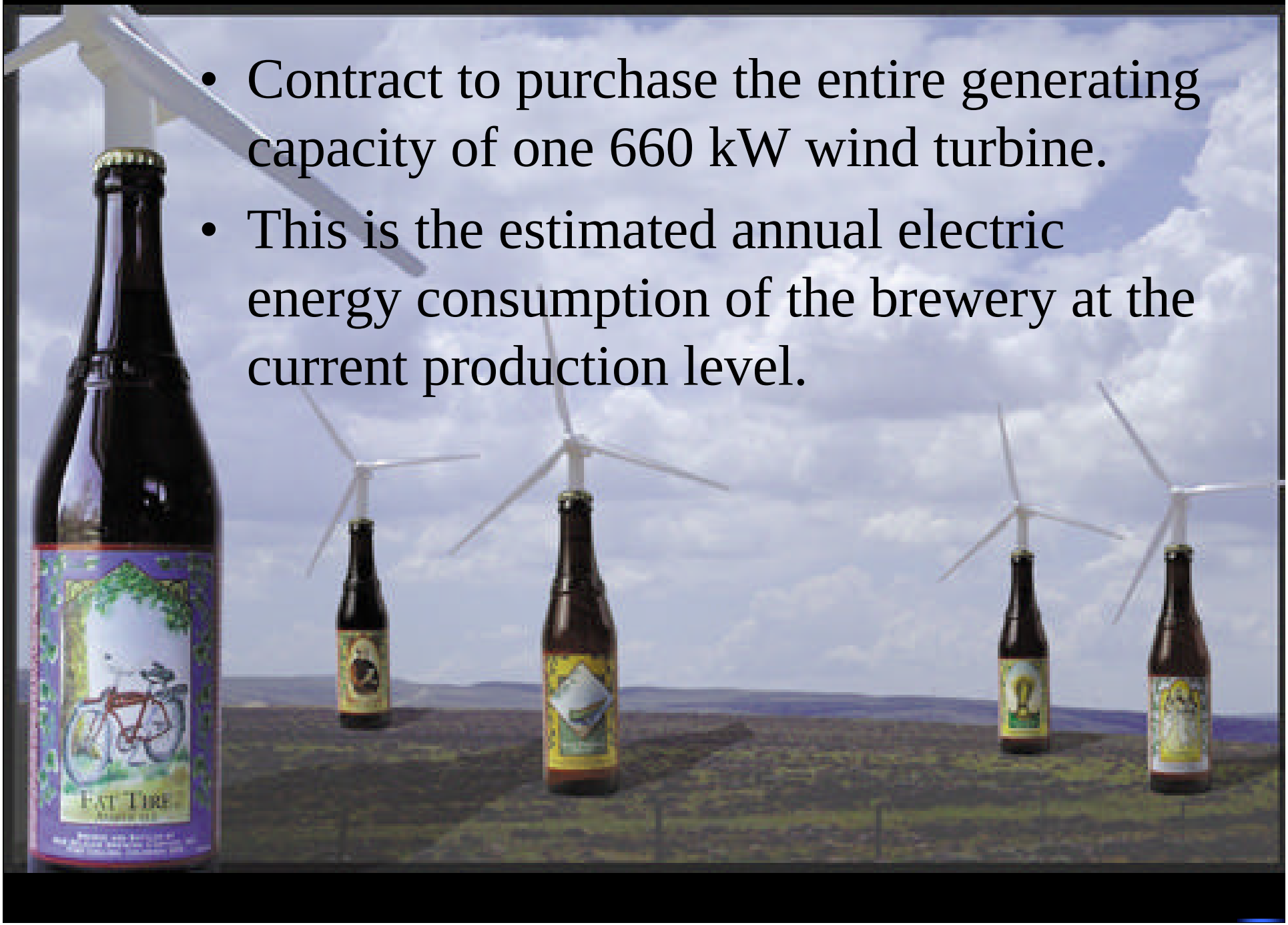


- CO2 recovery = $$
- moderate yield

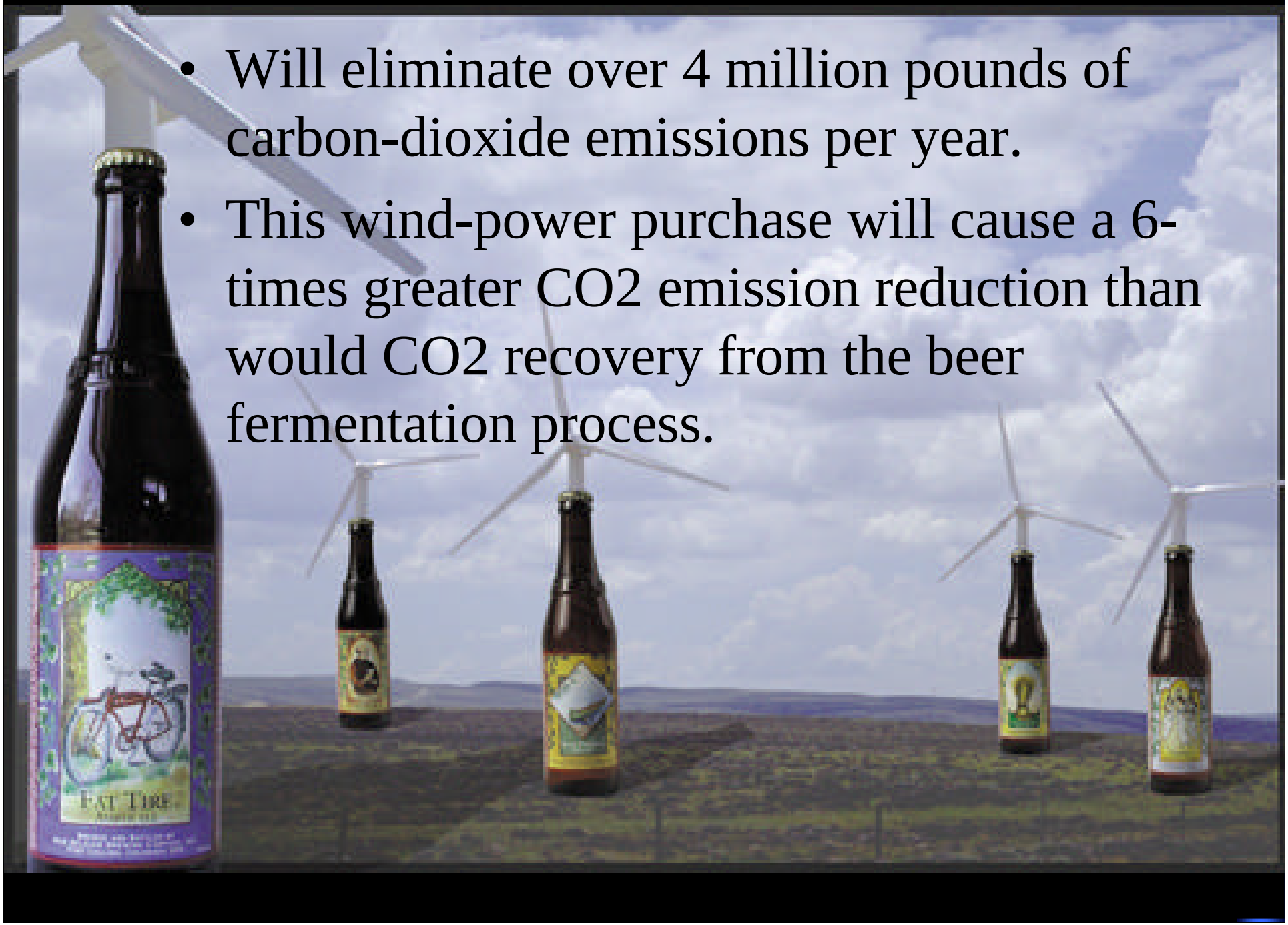
What about wind power?

- Approached by the City of Fort Collins, Electric Utility Department, suggesting purchase of wind-generated electric power
- Possibility to make a real waste stream reduction without time or capital investment

The first wind powered brewery
in America!
FAT TIRE



- Contract to purchase the entire generating capacity of one 660 kW wind turbine.
- This is the estimated annual electric energy consumption of the brewery at the current production level.



- Will eliminate over 4 million pounds of carbon-dioxide emissions per year.
- This wind-power purchase will cause a 6-times greater CO2 emission reduction than would CO2 recovery from the beer fermentation process.

What did we want from renewable energy?

- Internal feel-good
- Easy access
- Image and PR

Internal feel-good

- Environmental responsibility is important to the owners and employees
- Need to act, and not just talk
- Be a community and industrial leader

Easy access

- Wind power is an excellent option with near immediate realization
- Avoids long development time or high cost

Image and PR

- Another way to expose our name
- Gained national coverage through unconventional channels
- Claim to “Wind Powered Brewery”

Unexpected benefits

- Unanimous staff support, despite reduction of profit sharing bonus
- Strengthening of corporate fabric

Family focused:

Kids are always welcome!