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Granholm says Saginaw's manufacturing expertise attracted wind turbine company

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BUENA VISTA TWP. — Two years ago, when Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed into law the renewable energy standard requiring utility companies to garner 10 percent of their power from renewable sources, she was hoping to create jobs just like the ones that are now headed to Saginaw County.

Granholm on Tuesday announced a purchase agreement between Consumers Energy and Traverse City-based Heritage Sustainable Energy that will result in the first large-scale production of utility-scale wind turbines fully made in Michigan. The deal will result in the creation of up to 137 direct jobs by 2014.

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The deadline for the standard adopted by Granholm is 2015.

"When you create demand for renewable energy, you will create the jobs to help meet that demand,"

Granholm said. "This is an example, a poster case for how this renewable energy commitment creates jobs."

Vermont-based Northern Power Systems will build direct drive wind turbines in an existing Buena Vista Township facility, and plans to use Great Lakes Bay Region and Michigan suppliers, including Saginaw-based Merrill Technologies Group.

The manufacturing talent in Saginaw and around the state, Granholm said, will benefit Northern Power, and the company's advanced technology — a wind turbine that produces more energy but costs less to operate and maintain — will benefit the state.

The governor said the state is among the best in the nation when it comes to wind manufacturing. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, Michigan is expected to create more than 30,000 jobs in the wind manufacturing sector alone.

"We are clearly bouncing forward," Granholm said when asked if this was a good sign for Michigan's economy. "We are moving to a new economic structure, one that's much more balanced."

Read more about the wind turbine manufacturing planned for Saginaw County:

Top Saginaw economic development official: Wind turbine manufacturing is part of the plan

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