

Wind construction gets rave reviews

Turbine-power site set to be completed this fall

The Associated Press

UNION — Aside from some complaints about the truck traffic, the construction of 61 huge wind turbines south of Union is getting positive reviews, especially from businesses.

Debbie Ables, who owns Gravy Daves on Union's Main Street, said wind farm employees have been patronizing her restaurant.

"It's been good. We're excited," she said. "Any growth in Union is exciting."

Horizon Wind Energy's Elkhorn Valley wind farm is expected to be completed by November.

Trucks are hauling the mammoth turbine components from the Port of Vancouver, Wash., to the work site, passing through Union and North Powder in the process.

Dawn Buchee, manager of the Powder River Motel, said children in North Pow-

der turn out on the streets to watch the trucks go by.

And, she said, workers at the wind farm have been good for her business.

"We're full with them," she said. "We only have 12 rooms. I have 300 people fighting over them."

David Barcala, co-owner of the Union Hotel, said he hasn't perceived any additional business from wind farm employees, but the project is a great asset.

The trucks "are kind of fast," he said, "but the area needs to develop economically."

Sandra Patterson at the Union City Hall said there were a few complaints about truck traffic at the last council meeting, and the city hopes a wind farm representative will attend the next meeting to answer questions from the public.

Mike Colkitt, the manager of Union Market, said wind farm workers have been buying Gatorade, batteries and other supplies.

"I know a lot of individuals who have been employed for this outfit," he said. "We're happy for the city."