

Paul Smith's College going green

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PAUL SMITHS — Paul Smith's College will purchase wind-generated power to provide all of its electricity, joining just a handful of colleges and universities nationwide to do so. The college will purchase the electricity from Community Energy Inc., a Pennsylvania-based wind-energy marketer and developer.

"Purchasing renewable energy is an important step that the college can take to preserve our natural resources," John Mills, president of Paul Smith's College, said in a news release.

"Being the College of the Adirondacks also means providing environmental leadership. Every day, the threats posed by climate change and our reliance on fossil fuels create more tangible dangers. We're excited to take this step and hope that others might follow."

As part of the switch to wind power, Paul Smith's has joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership program.

As of March 30, just 13 other colleges and universities in the partnership relied entirely on renewables for their electricity needs.

"Paul Smith's College has stepped up as a leader in New York," Brent Alderfer, president of Community Energy, said in a statement.

Because of the nature of the electric grid, the actual wind-generated electrons the college purchases won't be delivered to campus. However, the renewable-energy credits bought by Paul Smith's will ensure that an amount of power equivalent to the college's energy use is generated by clean, renewable wind.

Based on its past usage, the college expects to purchase 3,625 megawatt-hours of electricity a year, which should offset about 5 million pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

That's equivalent to planting more than 341,109 trees or removing 357 cars from the road, the college said.

In addition to the green energy purchase, Paul Smith's is pursuing several other initiatives to preserve the environment.

This semester, waste from the campus dining hall is being composted at a nearby farm, and officials are examining the feasibility of integrating "green building" principles and strategies on campus construction projects.

Paul Smith's College is the only four-year institution of higher education within the Adirondack Park.

The school, on the shores of Lower St. Regis Lake, encompasses 14,200 acres of forests, streams, lakes and mountains.

Community Energy Inc. is a marketer and developer of wind energy, founded in 1999 and headquartered in Wayne, Pa.