

Bird-safe wind turbines soon may take flight

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MIDDLESEX BOROUGH — Between green energy, veterans' affairs and job creation, Jerry Lynch and Raymond Green are touching on quite the diverse spread of political buzzwords.

Neither seems to care too much about politics, though — just seeing a fascinating concept become reality.

Lynch, president of the borough-based Sigma Design Co., is taking the first steps toward testing, improving and manufacturing Green's patented invention: a specialized type of energy-generating wind turbine designed to prevent the accidental deaths of flying wildlife. The 89-year-old Green, a California resident and World War II veteran, felt strongly about entrusting the project to a veteran-owned company, and he found his man in Lynch, a former serviceman with the U.S. Navy.

The project could create as many as 25 new technology jobs in Central Jersey.

"We hope that some visibility sends some people of interest our way, and that we can figure out a way to fund it," Lynch said Wednesday.

The blades of traditional wind turbines can kill birds, bats and other forms of flying wildlife. Estimates released during the last several years have ranged from several tens of thousands to more than 400,000 of such creatures dying annually.

But Green's Catching Wind Power® Compressed Air Enclosed Wind Turbine eliminates external blades, and its patented inner compression cone technology squeezes incoming air as it is drawn through the turbine. This creates an increased power output with virtually no noise — the blades are internal, closer together and smaller, the men explained, therefore eliminating the sound traditional blades make as they spin and swoop past a tower.

The turbine can be produced in sizes ranging from personal portable units to massive wind farm arrays. Lynch said Green actually tested a prototype by strapping it to his car and driving down the street to generate airflow.

"We just waited for a good windy day," Lynch said of the preliminary testing done by his company, which has worked on alternative energy development with about 150 clients around the world during the last 15 years. "We collected some good preliminary data and put together a plan of what needs to be improved and done to commercialize this."

Lynch estimated that manufacturing could begin sometime within about 18 months to two years. Like solar paneling, the devices likely would supplement existing energy sources for commercial or residential customers, he explained.

"Every bungalow on the Jersey Shore could have a personal one on their roof, if we could make it attractive enough," Lynch said.

It's an appealing thought for Green, who seems as enthusiastic about his invention's prospects as he is about the opportunity to help fellow veterans.

"I am excited to have found Jerry and look forward to a successful venture," Green said. "There are so many disabled and unemployed veterans out there that I wanted to help ... so I searched the Internet to find someone that could manufacture and introduce my ... design to the public."

Lynch pledged that veterans will be among those hired for the new venture. It's important to him too, having served on a destroyer escort during the waning years of the Vietnam War.

Lynch purchased the now 50-year-old Sigma in 1999; it moved to Middlesex County last October after spending years headquartered in Springfield, Union and Irvington.