

Winding up for wind turbines



By **Tim Kane** Special to the Tribune
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The wind turbine at Other World Computing, south of Woodstock, is nearly 200 feet tall. (Photo by Tim Kane, Special to the Tribune)

A wind turbine that dominates the skyline on the south side of Woodstock is only half the size of some of the electricity-generating devices that someday could be coming to McHenry County.

The turbine that generates power for Other World Computing, 2650 Bridge Lane, stands just under 200 feet tall. It was erected more than

a year ago and its spinning 64-foot blades generate double the energy needed to power the plant, which employs 120 people, south of U.S. Highway 14.

As imposing as it looks, the wind turbine is classified as just a “midsize wind energy system,” in a draft of an ordinance being written by the McHenry County Communities Wind Energy Task Force.

Some wind farms in downstate Illinois have turbines that reach 500 feet in height, county officials said.

“We want to make sure that we have the standards in place in case somebody decides they want to build a wind farm here,” said Dennis Sandquist, director of planning for McHenry County.

The task force, which meets monthly, has been working on how to regulate how big wind turbines can be, where they should be placed and how they should look.

Dan Olson, director of community development for the village of Lake in the Hills and a task force member, said the county has a ways to go before completing the proposal.

Lawrence O’Connor Sr., whose son owns OWC and who oversaw installation of the wind turbine, also is a member of the task force. He said having standards in place would make it easier to erect more wind turbines and eliminate some of the uncertainty he faced when the concept still was so new.