

Wind energy development generates business at area port

ENCTODAY.COM

Published: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 1:27 PM EDT

<http://www.enctoday.com/news/-90675-jdn--.html>

JANNETTE PIPPIN

The development of wind energy projects is generating business for a North Carolina state port.

The Port of Morehead City recently received a second shipment of wind turbine components and is in good position to secure a place in the supply chain as the wind industry grows.

“Wind energy cargo is a target commodity for North Carolina’s Ports,” said N.C. State Ports Authority Chief Commercial Officer Glenn Carlson via a Ports Authority news release about the shipment. “The Ports are partnering with the N.C. Department of Commerce and the North Carolina Solar Center, to bring wind energy business to North Carolina. We are looking forward to developing more of these shipments through our Ports as the wind energy trade increases.”

One turbine was delivered on the most recent shipment and another two came through the Morehead City port on a shipment last August. All the units were for a project in Palm Springs, Calif.

The 45-foot channel draft, location on the East Coast and customized service made the Morehead City port an ideal facility for the cargo, according to the release. And shipping to the East Coast and then trucking the components proved more economical to the client than shipping to California, officials said.

The latest wind turbine shipment was discharged from the M/V PAC Alkaid and loaded onto three trucks for transport, a process that went well from beginning to end.

“From the pre-planning stages through to the same-day expediting of our trucks from vessel to terminal loading and dispatch, everything was done without a hitch,” said Keith Bowman, president of Perkins International, transportation logistics coordinator for the wind turbine shipment.

The turbine components shipped included three blades at

85 feet long and a nacelle, the cover that houses the generating components, according to State Ports Authority information.

While the wind turbine shipments to date have been destined for California, wind energy development in North Carolina could mean a growing commodity and a growing contribution to the wind industry for the ports.

According to the N.C. Solar Center, a 300-megawatt onshore project has been proposed and North Carolina has the best offshore wind resource of any East Coast state.

“The state is currently embracing its first onshore wind farm,” said Jen Banks, and our goal is that the state will also have the opportunity to embrace offshore wind development in the coming years,” said Jen Banks, wind energy project coordinator at the Solar Center.

The U.S. Department of Energy has set a goal of developing 54 gigawatts of offshore wind energy in the United States by the year 2030, which will likely require a supply chain of manufacturing facilities along the East Coast, the release said.

In addition to the wind turbine shipments, the Port of Morehead City has seen a flurry of activity in other areas as well.

Spirit Aerosystems, which is located at the Global Transpark in Kinston, performed a test shipment the week of April 18 of large aircraft components for the Airbus A350 XWB aircraft.

Also, the woodchip handling equipment at the port was recently refurbished, with log trucks arriving in early April with lumber. The goal is 40,000 tons of wood chips for export at the end of June, according to the State Ports Authority. The client for this new business at the Morehead City port is Cogent Fibre, an East Coast producer and exporter of pine wood chips.