



HANNIBAL BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

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RAN ON: April 6, 2016
TO: Hannibal Courier - Post
FROM: Robert W. Stevenson, P.E.
Re: Where Do We Go From Here?

I had a caller this week asking what he was supposed to do with all the information he has received over the last few weeks about wind generators in Kansas and Clean Line Energy. He also wanted to know why I bothered to write this series of articles if he was not expected to do something. Good questions.

When the subject of wind energy for Hannibal first came up, we had an awkward introduction. Clean Line Energy wanted to speak privately to city and utility leaders about their business plan. Our planned meeting was publicly announced then criticized for being improperly executed. That meeting was attended by many people with an agenda to stop the Clean Line project. Accusations were made about the Board and Council trying to do things in secret which was not the case, but appeared so. I promised at that meeting we would have no secrets related to Clean Line Energy. This series of articles has been my attempt to fulfill that promise.

I have explained our City's need for power and how wind energy from Kansas might fill that need. I have shared the general terms of the Clean Line options offered to us. I have tried to dispel the notion the Clean Line project is dependent on our approval or partnership. Clean Line needs energy customers in Missouri, but a contract with Hannibal alone will not be enough to change the PSC. And, finding other customers for them is not our problem.

Sometime in the next few weeks we expect to see a more definitive offer from Clean Line with or without other Municipal electric cities. In the meantime we are having discussions with other suppliers of wind energy to see if we can get the same benefits to Hannibal without pitting ourselves against those opposed to new transmission lines. Eventually, the HBPW and the City Council will be asked to approve some form of agreement that could bring wind energy to Hannibal. That agreement might be one contingent on a successful Clean Line construction or it could be from another supplier entirely.

Here then is the answer to my caller's first question. Form an educated opinion of wind energy for Hannibal and share it with us. Send us a post on our Facebook page or contact us through our website. Please identify yourself as a customer if you are, because your opinion is our top priority. Here are some basic questions to ask yourself. Is renewable energy good for us? Might this energy source save us money? Are the possible savings on our bills worth the possible ill feelings from our neighbors? Can concerns about the company itself be minimized with good contracts? Are we content to continue purchasing power from the traditional or coal based market, or should we open ourselves to new technologies and new market players?

Mr. Rodenbaugh suggested in his letter last week that the US Department of Energy may exercise their authority and overrule the PSC, expediting the Clean Line project. We should all hope that does not happen. I predict that landowners would be the most unhappy group if our government applies their one-size-fits-all thinking to local land use. Easement payments and local tax collections may shrink, and Hannibal and other potential users of the line in Missouri may get left out of the deal entirely. It would be better for all Missourians if the PSC kept control of the project within our state.

For more information regarding the Clean Line Energy Project or to read past articles on this subject, visit our website at www.hannibalbpw.org.

“The mission of the Hannibal Board of Public Works is to provide safe, reliable utility products with excellent customer service at reasonable prices.”