

Great Plains hopes to improve road in park

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Jul 27, 2020

OSWEGO — Great Plains Industrial Park representatives on Monday said they are seeking grants and engineering work to improve 22000 Road in the park's footprint.

Great Plains representatives Brad Reams, park director, and Tim Peoples, property manager, visited with Labette County commissioners Monday morning. These updates normally come once a month but have been delayed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Peoples said Great Plains wants to work on 22000 Road because of increased truck traffic. Transportation Partners & Logistics (TP&L) has a laydown yard to receive and store wind industry components at Great Plains. The company transports these parts to wind energy projects within a few hundred miles.

During the last few months, TP&L has trucked these components to Neosho Ridge Wind, a 139-turbine wind farm being constructed in Neosho County, and the smaller North Fork Ridge Wind in northern Jasper County, Missouri. Peoples said transportation to North Fork is complete, but trucking components to Neosho County is still ongoing. In September, construction on another wind farm, Kings Point, will begin southeast of North Fork and near Golden City, Missouri.

Peoples said TP&L ran 20 to 30 trucks a day out of Great Plains when both construction projects were active. Now, truck traffic is down to 10 trucks a day out of Great Plains, he said.

Traffic will pick up in September and again as other projects are built.

Commissioner Lonie Addis was concerned about the condition of 24000 Road, which is used by trucks from TP&L to get components to U.S. 400. He said the road is not in as bad of condition as he thought it would be. Peoples indicated the pivot points of the large trailers used to haul the wind farm components, such as blades, cause the most wear to the roadways as the trucks leave Great Plains. The county wants to improve Scott Road, which is gravel, north of Great Plains so it can accept these heavier trucks and provide them quicker access to U.S. 400.

Addis asked Reams about prospects for Great Plains and how the pandemic has impacted recruiting

jobs to the park.

“It slowed it quite a bit,” Reams said.

The pandemic has limited travel and in-person meetings and it has increased video calls. The Kansas Department of Commerce, which has provided economic development leads, also has halved its travel in recent months.

National prospects are better able to continue with visits to potential sites for expansions, Reams said. A group from California is expected to visit the park next week, he said.

In other business:

— Commissioner Addis said he asked for legal research on issuing general obligation bonds for possible use in constructing a new county courthouse that would include space for district courtrooms that have restrictions on physical distancing and sanitation practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic. County Counselor Brian Johnson said the county could issue up to 3% of the county’s valuation in G.O. bonds, which would be \$4.2 million. Commissioners didn’t know if that would be enough to build the multi-use facility or if the project was feasible for a county of 20,000 residents. Taxpayers would get to vote on a general obligation bond issue. Commissioners are proposing using a portion of federal COVID-19 relief funds to remodel the courthouse in Oswego to improve courtroom facilities.

— The commission approved an annual software agreement with Computer Information Concepts for \$44,985. The software is used by many county departments.

— The commission discussed the nearly dozen county vehicles damaged in the hail and wind storm earlier this month in Oswego. Some of the vehicles have not been seen by an insurance adjuster. Commissioners may discuss the matter again this week.