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Sustainable Energy Developments brings PowerWind wind turbine to Berkshire East Ski

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The perfect match - that's what Sustainable Energy Developments, Inc. (SED) set out to find when Berkshire East Canopy Tours and Ski Area general manager, Jonathan Schaefer, approached the Ontario, N.Y. wind development company about the potential of a wind project at his Mass. based ski resort. After much research and a visit to Germany, SED chief executive officer Kevin Schulte, found that perfect match in the PowerWind wind turbine.

In 2006, Schulte initiated a search for mid-size (600kW to 1MW) wind technologies in an effort to appropriately serve the community wind market. A year into his exploration, Schulte learned of PowerWind, a German based manufacturer of wind turbines with production facilities in Bremerhaven.

The fact that PowerWind was not ready to come to the U.S. did not stop Schulte's search. In 2008 SED sponsored Windustry's Community Wind Energy Conference in Albany. Jon and Jim Schaefer, who run the family owned and operated Berkshire East Ski Area, approached the SED booth at the conference.

The Schaefers had already taken several steps in their efforts to go green and were ready to take the next step towards a wind project. Schulte and project manager Dave Strong moved Berkshire East and the Schaefers through the next phases of the wind project process, including applying for and receiving a feasibility grant from the Mass. Clean Energy Center (MCEC) in the summer of 2008.

In the spring of 2009 Schulte got together with PowerWind officials at the American Wind Energy Association's WINDPOWER 2009 in Chicago.

SED had already completed the feasibility study for Berkshire East and, with a design and construction grant from the MCEC, was entering what proved to be a challenging permitting stage. The feasibility study proved the ski resort to be an ideal site for a wind project; now Schulte just needed a wind turbine to make the project the most economical and environmental for the Schaefers. The PowerWind 56 was that perfect match, and throughout the six months of permitting the wind turbine and a visit to their manufacturing facility in Hamberg by Schulte next month, SED and PowerWind came to a mutual decision to bring the PowerWind 56, a 900kW wind turbine, to the Berkshire East Ski Area.

SED and PowerWind are two young, growing companies, much like Berkshire East was at its foundation. The Schaefers meeting with WindPower's head of marketing Carsten Dickman and product manager Ralph Diehl along with Schulte and Strong proved the three companies had more in common than wind energy. Dickman expressed that 150 families in Hamburg were excited to be connected to Berkshire East's future while the Schaefer's connected the 200 families that would benefit from PowerWind's technology, keeping the business alive well into the future.

