

EDITOR'S DESK

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While the prices of fossil fuels continue to decline, the clean energy industry is still booming, potentially heralding in a new age for wind energy development.

While oil prices have plunged to their lowest in 12 years at less than \$30 per barrel, making it easier on everyone's wallets at the pump, wind and other forms of renewable energy are growing, following Congress' extension of the federal production tax credit (PTC) in December 2015 for wind generators to include wind farms that are starting construction through the end of 2019. This competitiveness is new, since the last time oil was at this low price, the cost of renewable energy alternatives was much higher.

According to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), wind energy installed more electric generating capacity in 2015 than any other energy source in the U.S. Starting from a noticeably larger installed capacity base than solar, wind grew by 13 percent last year and is forecasted to continue to increase by 14 percent in 2016 and another 3 percent in 2017, contributing to the overall forecast of total renewables used in the electric power sector to increase by 8.1 percent in 2016 according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) also recently published a new study in partnership with the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) as a factbook about new energy technologies that have furthered critical advances in the U.S. and locked in long-term gains in 2015. According to BNEF, the fourth edition of the "Sustainable Energy in America Factbook" provides key facts and figures on the progression of the U.S. energy sector that concluded an estimated 8.5 GW of new build in wind capacity was installed in 2015 — 65 percent more than the same levels in 2014 as wind farm developers rushed to complete construction before the previous PTC expired.

This data is encouraging for the U.S. wind energy industry as it enters this new phase of operations in 2016 and in the years going forward, and it has us here at *Wind Systems* excited for what's in store.

This month's issue is dedicated to the systems, components, and parts that keep wind farms up and running. Our inFocus section features a company profile on OBO Bettermann of North America, a leading provider in meeting the high demands for quality and reliability in wind turbines and towers. You'll also find our conversation with Kyle Riegel, a research and design engineer at United Equipment Accessories, Inc., where we discuss the company's role as a leading slip ring assembly manufacturer in the wind market. Additionally, we feature a column by Bruce Bailey from AWS Truepower on the state of wind farm underperformance syndrome and ways to remedy it as well as articles from returning columnists Jeff Walkup of Gram & Juhl North America and Gordon Moran of the European Energy Centre who share their insights in their respective areas of expertise.

As always, thanks for reading!

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