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HOW AND WHEN DID INTERTEK GET INVOLVED IN THE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY?

We have a long history of involvement with the energy industry, and when many of the traditional providers began focusing on wind we immediately saw that we could play a valuable role in that market as well. Our point of entry involved the fact that many of the wind farm developers were independent power producers rather than utilities, so they needed a company like Intertek to provide third-party independent power producers that their electrical systems were in compliance. So we began offering that service in 2003, and we've since expanded our capabilities to include turbine testing, inspection, and type certification as well as gearbox oil condition monitoring and lubricant quality testing, among many other services. As an OSHA-accredited National Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) we also conduct small wind testing and certification to ensure compliance with AWEA's new 9.1 standard. We began our work in the wind energy industry here in North America, and we've since established offices devoted to wind services in Europe and Asia. Our primary focus is still on North America, however, due to the activity and volume.

TELL US ABOUT THE SMARTTRACK PROGRAM.

I'd be glad to. Our SmartTrack Program for large wind turbines involves completing field labeling as quickly as possible, and in such a way that we're working through the certification process simultaneously. The program begins with a desktop design review and then moves into a construction review, the development of a compliance plan, completing field label/site inspection reports, and then conducting onsite inspections prior to issuing the certification report. And once those reports are available they're posted

on our secure server so that clients can access that documentation at any time. Our stance is that companies should consider capitalizing on all the work they've already done to achieve certification rather than continuing along the field-labeling path. This can be especially useful for companies that are already established overseas that wish to enter the North American market. Another aspect of this process involves prequalification, either of components or entire systems, so that compliance evaluations are performed before shipments leave the factory. That helps avoid unexpected problems in the field and even commissioning delays, which can be quite expensive.

AS A GLOBAL ENTITY WITH A HISTORY GOING BACK 126 YEARS, IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'D BE AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE TO AWEA IN ITS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND TO NREL'S R&D EFFORTS.

Actually, we're pretty heavily involved with both. As a member of AWEA we're helping develop national standards so that OEMs, developers, and owner/operators will know what to expect no matter where they're working. We want to help them avoid situations in the field where an inspector points out something that wasn't required two states away. Some of the areas that we've been involved in so far include the IEC 61400 suite of standards and the new VL6141 for large wind turbine electrical systems and components, as well as others addressing small wind turbines and power conversion equipment. We're also contributing to Canadian electrical systems standards being developed. As for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), we're involved in a number of initiatives, one of them being the AWEA 9.1 small wind standard that I've mentioned. We a regional test center for small wind certification, in fact. As the North American wind industry matures, it is reaching a stage where requirements are more stringent and there have to be guidelines in terms of quality assurance and standardization. And while we may never reach the point of true regulatory harmonization between different states and countries, the closer we can get the better off the global wind market will be. We will continue playing an active role in helping build an efficient structure for OEMs around the world to operate within and to help ease their entry into new markets. We can provide a roadmap for companies entering the wind market so they don't have to start from scratch. ↘

For more information go online to www.intertek.com/wind.