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What can you tell our readers about the Joplin region? How would you describe its climate/suitability for the wind energy industry?

There are three words we use that are best representative of the Joplin region: Central, Connected, and Capable.

Central: The Joplin region's strong central U.S. location is right in the heart of growing wind energy markets.

Connected: Efficient, cost-effective highway and rail transportation routes provide easy connection to major wind project areas. Eight OEM turbine manufacturers are located within 600 miles of Joplin.

Capable: The Joplin region is home to a large, hard-working labor force has the capabilities to meet the highest level of customer demands.

Could you talk briefly about the level of wind energy industry involvement already present or planned for the Joplin region?

Existing Joplin region companies are already engaged in the wind industry and offer unique supply chain opportunities in fiberglass nacelles and hubs, turbine gearbox bearings, fabricated metal structures and components, electronics and cabling, energy storage systems and oversize, overweight transportation.

How would you describe the general opinion toward renewable energy – wind specifically – in the Joplin region?

Industries and individuals alike are embracing alternative energy sources and look for continual improvement in cost, storage options and ease of attainment.

Could you mention some of the educational opportunities that may exist as they relate to wind energy and other related industries?

The rest of the workforce in the Joplin region is enhanced with training facilities focused on technology.

These facilities include: The Kansas Technology Center at Pittsburg State University, the Missouri Alternative and Renewable Energy Technology Center at Crowder College, the Missouri Advanced Power Systems Research at Missouri Southern State University. ↴

JOPLIN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The seven-county Joplin region is located near the geographic and population centers of the United States. The City of Joplin is the hub of a Metropolitan Statistical Area of 179,000 people and a regional market area of nearly 500,000. The area's market reach, productive workforce and high quality of living make the Joplin Region an ideal location for manufacturing, warehousing, & distribution.

WORKFORCE

The JRP region has workforce of more than 200,000. Based on a recent labor market survey by the Docking Institute, the available workforce pool is nearly 94,000 people. Of this available workforce, more than 50% have some level of college or technical school education and 94% are high-school graduates.

Wages in the region are very competitive. Wages are approximately 80-85% of U.S. averages, depending on employment sector. Area employers give high-ratings to the productivity and loyalty of their workforce. While it is not unusual for companies to draw employees from as far as 60 minutes away, the average commute time is only 17 minutes, reflecting the efficient highway system and overall lack of traffic congestion in the region.