

Mass High Tech: The Journal of New England Technology - November 26, 2007
<http://masshightech.bizjournals.com/masshightech/stories/2007/11/26/story8.html>



Friday, November 23, 2007

Maine to get first tidal turbine test

Mass High Tech: The Journal of New England Technology - by [Efrain Viscarolasaga](#) Mass High Tech

After three years and more than \$1 million, Maine's first tidal turbine generator, developed by Fall River-based Ocean Renewable Power Co. LLC, is expected to get wet in early December.

But while the location -- at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, near Eastport, Maine -- is expected to be the final resting spot of the full-service module, the immediate, single-turbine deployment is expected to last only about seven days and serve as a pilot test for the full deployment.

The unit is expected to go into the water during the first week of December, weather permitting.

While Ocean Renewable Power Co. is supported by \$2 million in angel investment, the project is also being funded by \$300,000 each from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and the Maine Technology Institute. The deal represents the first cooperative investment between the two quasi-public institutions.

"One of the great things about this project is the regional cooperation, and we hope there are more in the future" said Joe Migliaccio, program manager of development awards for the Maine Technology Institute.

The goal of the pilot test is to measure electrical output produced by the 6-knot ebb and flow of the 16-foot tide in the bay, one of the largest tidal sways in the world. It would also track environmental and other operational data that would be used in the development of the final module, according to Ocean Renewable Power CEO Christopher Sauer.

The final system, which would include three of the 25-foot-long turbines and cost an estimated \$10 million to \$12 million, could generate as much as 1 megawatt of energy annually, or enough to power about 200 households.

Ocean Renewable Power was originally founded in Florida in 2004 as Red Circle Systems Corp., and aimed to use the Gulf Stream off the coast of Florida as the energy source for its underwater turbines. The company was able to secure permits for six sites in the area, but the deployment process was slowed because of logistics and financing so the company shifted its attention to tidal power.

"Tidal currents are much better applications," said Sauer. "They are closer to the shore and the

flows of water are greater."

That shift brought Ocean Renewable Power to Fall River, where the company set up shop in the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. The move north also introduced the company to the UMass Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology, which has helped Ocean Renewable Power map the site and provided more development data.

Ocean Renewable Power has secured a permit for another deployment in Maine, near Cobscook Bay, as well as one in Alaska.

According to Sauer, the company is pitching to local investors, in search of an additional \$10 million to \$12 million in private funding.

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.