

## Marquiss Wind Power raises \$1.5M to deploy up to 10 rooftop turbines

Firm catches the air up there

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Photo courtesy of Marquiss Wind Power Inc.

Marquiss Wind Power says its rooftop-mounted wind turbine can power a small office building.

Commercial business owners who want to supply their buildings with renewable energy have one reliable source -- solar.

A Folsom startup company hopes to double the choices to include wind.

Marquiss Wind Power Inc. has designed a prototype of a rooftop-mounted wind turbine that it says can produce enough electricity to run a small office building.

Marquiss chief executive officer Paul Misso said the company will probably charge about \$30,000 for its wind-turbine system. A customer would recoup that cost in about three to four years through energy savings, about half the payback time of a solar-power system, he said.

The company has a lot more work to do before the technology will be ready for market. It has raised about \$1.5 million in its initial funding round, which it expects to close in a few weeks. The money would cover costs to place six to 10 demonstration units on rooftops around town, Misso said. Teichert Inc. wants to be one of the first customers.

The Marquiss turbine looks a bit like a huge box fan, with a propeller mounted inside a steel box 17 feet on a side and not quite 3 feet deep. Steel flaps along the edge of the

box automatically orient the rotor blades into the wind. The fan blades spin a turbine that generates electricity.

Stanley Marquiss, an inventor in the Amador County town of Plymouth, created the machine and sold the patent to Marquiss. He worked on the technology for 15 or 20 years, and he's an investor and consultant to the company, Misso said.

Velocity Venture Capital LLC is the lead investor in Marquiss and the only venture capital investor in the Series A round. The rest are angel and "strategic" investors, Misso said.

"The market looks to us like wind power is going to shift from centralized wind-farm architecture to a distributed model," Velocity general partner Jacob Jorgensen said. "Part of the problem with distributed turbines is they don't do well on rooftops because of wind turbulence. ... This turbine was designed specifically with the idea of putting it on a rooftop."

The enclosed design is also less noisy and safer than wind turbines with open rotor blades, he said.

Misso was recruited by Roger Nordby, who met him when they both worked at Intel Corp.

Nordby, who has invested in Marquiss and sits on its board of directors, is known in the Sacramento region as the man who brought Packard Bell NEC Inc.'s manufacturing plant to the former Sacramento Army Depot in the 1990s.

After the plant closed in 2000, Nordby moved to the Bay Area and was hired to revive and sell three companies, "all of which were financially very good for the owners and myself," he said.

Nordby, who is now retired, has also invested in the Folsom fuel-cell technology firm Jadoo Power Systems Inc. He won't say how much he has invested in Marquiss.

"I really believe wind power is going to be the winner over solar," he said. "What these guys have done in the past few years is really creative and I think will generate good returns for investors."

NMI Industrial Contractors in Sacramento has built and tested the prototype turbine for Marquiss at no charge.

"Our owner, Scott Chastain, was enamored with the idea of renewable energy and really saw it as an opportunity for growth and expansion of NMI," said NMI chief financial officer Peter Elorduy.

Typically, NMI designs and installs electrical components and machinery for processing food and gravel.

It's "atypical" for the company to wait for payment until one of its customers receives funding, Elorduy said. NMI made an exception for Marquiss.

"We believe in the concept and are looking to be their manufacturer," he said.

The wind turbines use equipment similar to that in solar energy systems to tie into a building's electrical system.

The wind-power equipment will need maintenance at least annually and could last 25 years or more. At wind speeds of 28 miles per hour, it would produce about 11.8 kilowatts. A typical commercial building less than 30,000 square feet uses about 13 kilowatts per hour, according to a California Energy Commission report.

"We've got a technology that solves the problem of putting a wind turbine on an urban or suburban rooftop," Misso said. "We've effectively opened millions of acres for renewable technology."

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