

# Composites Industry Monthly

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## Industry Shows its Strength at WindPower 2008

While wind energy is a topic often discussed in this newsletter, it is proving to have one of the most explosive curves of any consumer of composite materials and services. Not only is wind energy forecasted to grow about 20% annually over the next ten years, but the demand for related composite materials is rising at an even faster rate. Despite the current economic malaise in the United States, the wind industry continues to advance as if immune and spurred by the

rising costs of “mainstream” power generation. As evidence, the show floor at the recent **Windpower 2008 Conference and Exhibition**, held in Houston, TX, was packed and brimming with confidence throughout the entire event. The four-day event drew in 776 exhibitors and more than 13,000 non-exhibiting attendees – nearly twice the size of last year’s event and making it the largest wind energy event in the world. Beyond the show floor, Windpower 2008 hosted about 300 speakers organized into a session covering a wide range of finance, business planning, regulation and government policy, etc.

One of the major announcements made at the show was the **U.S. Department of Energy’s (DoE)** release of its plan for developing wind energy to supply 20% of U.S. electrical demand by 2030. The U.S., under this study, could cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% and help electricity hedge against further escalation in fuel prices. The scenario described in the DoE’s report indicates that the U.S. market for new wind turbines

would grow from last year’s record installations of 5,244-MW up to 16,000-MW within the next two decades. The associated growth opportunities helped to draw some big name speakers to the event. Among a few of the star guests were John Podesta (President and CEO of the **Center for American Progress** and former White House Chief of Staff), General Wesley Clark (retired, former Supreme Commander of NATO), Pat Wood (the principle of **Wood3 Resource** and former staffer for President Bush) and Jeff Goodell (New York Times best-selling author of “*Big Coal*”). These speakers hosted a round-table session to discuss some of the major issues surrounding this industry.

At the time of the event, the market price for oil had just risen past \$120 per barrel, and the cost of natural gas had grown from about \$7.50 per 1,000-ft<sup>3</sup> in January to \$12.00. While these figures are objective facts, it did suit the vested biases of Podesta, General Clark and Wood to highlight these changes (as most Western consumers easily recog-

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