



# How Benton County Created a Lasting Economic Impact with Wind Energy

## Welcome to Benton County, Indiana.

Like many rural counties, Benton struggles with a declining population, strained county budgets and a community of farmers dependent on the weather for a productive harvest.

## Wind farms offer economic development opportunity.

In 2006 the Benton County Commission began developing a wind energy ordinance due to initial interest from some energy companies. The county was thrilled to explore a new economic development opportunity that fit its rural nature. Working with the developers to understand the process and end product, they developed Indiana's first wind farm ordinance; In 2008, the Benton County Wind farm went online. A second followed in 2009 and three more over the next decade. Today, Benton County produces 1288 Megawatts of electricity from 647 turbines across five wind farms: Benton County Wind, Hoosier Wind, Fowler Ridge Wind, Jordan Creek Wind, and Meadow Lake Wind.

## Benton County is a rural county proud of its agricultural heritage.

Today, the difference between Benton and so many other rural counties across America is that they harvest the wind right alongside corn, soybeans, and wheat. Many Benton County farmers have a drought-proof income that helps them through the hard times and improves the good times.

## **In Benton County, all citizens benefit from the millions of dollars that have made their community a better place to live and work.**

By 2039 (starting in 2008), Benton County will receive over \$60 million in property taxes and economic development payments from wind farms. And to date, 95 full-time employees work at the Benton County wind farms (and that's not including the hundreds of construction workers employed to build the wind farms over the years).

### **County Services Improved**

\$60 million in property tax and economic development payments from Wind Farms (2008-2039) went to Benton County. That money was used to improve county services.

Thanks to the wind farms, the **Benton County Schools received an additional \$3 million** through 2018. Every resident of Benton County can cast their vote during elections knowing that their local election infrastructure is getting the funds it needs, **to the tune of over \$150,000 from the wind farm funds between 2012 and 2019**. The health and welfare of Benton County are better off too. Over the last decade, the county has funded **clinic operations with \$789,000** from wind farm funds and provided another **\$94,000 to pay nurse salaries**. And these are just a few examples.

Benton County is a shining example of what renewable energy can do for a community – helping to stabilize budgets, providing for farmers, and bringing jobs and new investment. Tens of millions of dollars have gone to schools and first responders, to county services and healthcare, and to pay off old debt. These investments in Benton County would not have been possible or would have come at taxpayers' expense without wind energy. And it all started with a recognition that wind would be good for their rural county and the development of an ordinance that worked for everyone.