

Here are five businesses that are harvesting power and profits from the wind — though it isn't always a cake walk to get permission to get started.

1. A small brewery fought for wind power. Eric Reece and Aubrey Davis, former Peace Corps volunteers, own [Outer Banks Brewing Station](#) in the seaside town of Kill Devil Hills, N.C. Using natural energy [saves](#) the nation's first wind-powered brew pub between \$150 and \$250 per month on grid-produced electricity. The cost to install the turbine: \$50,000, which Reece and Davis expect to recoup within 11 years. The brewery owners fought for five years to get zoning approval from town officials. The duo tried numerous approaches, at one point offering to donate all of the windmill's savings to local schools. They finally got the go-ahead after working to get new local legislators elected.

2. A New England garden center cuts costs. Visitors to the Hyannis Country Garden, in Hyannis, Mass., instantly [notice](#) its large wind turbine rising skyward amid seven acres of lush foliage. The turbine generates most of the [electricity](#) needed to run the business. According to a [case study](#) conducted by Northern Power Systems, the nursery offsets more than 90 percent of its electrical costs, which saves the company around \$30,000 a year.

3. A suburban restaurant leaves the grid, despite the costs. [The Great Escape on Irving](#), in Schiller Park, Ill., supplies all of the company's electricity needs from a wind turbine and [sells](#) excess power back to [Commonwealth Edison](#). While the restaurant is closed at night, the turbine's 62-foot blades produce enough excess electricity to power up to 30 homes, depending on wind speed. Restaurateur [Brian Great](#) concedes that the \$375,000 switchover proved more costly than sticking with the status quo but he believes that personally subsidizing the project will encourage other early adopters.

4. A boost in reputation for an organic farmer. [E.B. Stone & Son](#), in Suisun City, Calif., manufactures a variety of eco-friendly products. The company is situated a stone's throw away from a 6,100-acre wind farm that supplies its electrical power. Impressed by the brisk demand for wind-powered organically grown produce, E.B. Stone & Son decided to trademark the phrase "Wind-Powered Organics" and printed it on its grocery bags and sacks of fertilizer. Subsequently, sales more than [doubled](#).

5. A rancher finds a passion for wind power. "The wind blows here whether we harvest it or not," says Shaun Sims, a fifth-generation rancher, in Evanston, Wyo. Sims was recently [profiled](#) in an online advertising campaign sponsored by the [American Wind Energy Association](#). For ranchers and farmers, wind power is often a good fit, he says. Wind resource maps, [developed](#) by the [U.S. Department of Energy](#), can quantify your estimated savings per year.

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