

Orangeville Wind Farm operations suspended after turbine blade breaks

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ORANGEVILLE — Operations at the Orangeville Wind Farm have been suspended as a precaution, after a wind turbine's blade broke Sunday morning.

The break occurred about 7 a.m. in the wind farm's 34th tower, near Centerline Road and Route 20A, according to Invenergy.

The turbine's commissioning had begun Wednesday and the unit was operating at the time, Invenergy officials said in a statement. No injuries were reported.

"Out of caution, all turbine commissioning and turbine operations at the wind farm have been suspended," the statement reads. "We are working with GE, the turbine manufacturer, to determine the root cause of this incident."

The Orangeville Wind Farm has 58 turbines. Construction was recently completed, and the commissioning process began about the same time.

The process involves testing and software configuration for each turbine once it's erected. The unit undergoes a series of standard operational tests; is synchronized to the electricity grid; and then certified as ready to operate.

Commissioning was expected to take about two months, Invenergy officials said on Nov. 1. It wasn't immediately clear Sunday evening if the overall schedule would be affected.

It's unknown if weather played any part in the incident. A wind advisory had been issued for Wyoming County most of Sunday, with winds of 20 to 30 mph, and gusts up to 50 mph.

Each of the wind farm's turbines is about 430 feet tall, and will have a generating capacity of 1.6 megawatts. The blades themselves weigh about 20,000 pounds and are about 160 feet long.

No oil was spilled in the incident, Invenergy officials said. In the meantime, operations at the company's adjacent High Sheldon Wind Farm are continuing as normal.

Once operating, the turbines will generate enough energy to power more than 38,000 homes, Invenergy officials said earlier this month. The project's substation was also "energized" on Oct. 30.

