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[Cause of turbine blade break unknown](#)

Study to determine cause of break may not occur until late March

By Martin Slagter Kokomo Tribune [Kokomo Tribune](#)

It stands idle on the northeast side of Tipton County, one of its three blades broken off. But more than two weeks after wind turbine G14 lost its blade, it is still unclear why, and when the turbine will be back up and running.

The turbine's size and the equipment needed to take it apart to determine what caused the break are making for a difficult repair schedule.

A representative of E.On who asked not to be identified said Tuesday that the company is in the process of acquiring a rare crane, which will be brought to Tipton County to disassemble the entire turbine hub. The turbine, which is located in the Wildcat Wind Farm near 650 North and 725 East in Windfall, broke on the afternoon of Feb. 1.

Once a crane arrives, E.On will be able to conduct studies to determine what caused the break, but that could take until late March because there are only a few of those types of cranes available in the U.S. Heavy snowfall this winter also could complicate the process of bringing in equipment to disassemble the turbine if the ground is still soft when the crane is available, the E.On representative said.

Spokesman Elon Hasson issued a statement on behalf of E.On, but was not available for further comment.

“We don't know the cause of the incident but will thoroughly investigate to determine the nature of this failure. Such failures are rare but the reality is that mechanical components sometimes fail. The wind farm continues to operate safely.”

General Electric, which produces the turbine blades, released a statement regarding the broken blade, noting that a cause cannot be determined until an investigation has been conducted.



“We are working closely with E.On to perform the root cause analysis of the blade event at Wildcat. Our process is to assign a team to perform a thorough investigation to identify the root cause, take appropriate corrective action and bring the turbine back online as soon as possible.

“Blade breaks in wind turbines are rare, however, as with any industrial business, at times equipment malfunctions occur. The quality and availability of our wind turbines is of utmost importance to us, and as always, if there is any issue, we work with our customers directly to address them.”

The blade break is not the first for GE, which recently attributed a pair of blade breaks in December at the Orangeville Wind Farm in New York and Echo Wind Park in Michigan to a spar cap manufacturing anomaly.

GE representatives would not speculate whether the blade break at Wildcat Wind Farm was associated with the spar cap anomaly.

The Wildcat Wind Farm, located in eastern Tipton County and northwestern Madison County, went into operation in December 2012.

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