

Wind turbine topples in Mill Run, startles residents

By [Karl Polacek](#)

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When big wind turbines fall, they make a lot of noise. But not everyone hears the crash.



Wayne Steyer, 75, of Clay Run Road in Mill Run, Springfield Township, was in his basement watching TV about 9 p.m. Wednesday when the power flickered. His wife, Ruth, 73, who was on the main floor of their home, heard a rumble and saw the same flickering of the electricity.

“I thought it was thunder,” she said.

The couple's daughter-in-law, Trudy, 45, who lives next door with her husband Ronald, said she heard the rumble and felt her house shake.

“I thought it was thunder snow,” she said. “We get that a lot of that up here in the winter.”

Trudy Steyer and her daughter, Laura, said they ran out onto the porch and looked up the hill toward the ridge line.

“What's that lump?” Trudy Steyer said she asked. “And where is that windmill (the wind turbine that used to stand at that location)?”

The wind turbine, the last of four that stood along the ridge in a line on what used to be Wayne Steyer's property, fell to the ground. It now lies in a twisted mass near where it stood since 2001. NextEra Energy Resources owns the line of wind turbines along a 300-foot wide right of way purchased from Wayne Steyer. The site is called the Mill Run Energy Center.

"I'm surprised it fell," said Wayne Steyer, adding it was a quiet night with very little wind. "We've had a lot of strong wind this year, but not last night."

There were no injuries reported.

Steve Stengel, a spokesman for NextEra, said it is too early for the company to determine the cause of the failure.

"We've dispatched several teams to help the local team determine what happened," Stengel said. "Wind turbines are very safe, very reliable."

According to Stengel, the company generates more than 10,000 megawatts of electricity through its 10,000 wind turbines around the nation.

A search on the Internet found another collapse in a wind farm in Oregon. But that collapse happened during a period of high wind.

Stengel said the turbines are located on private property away from buildings.

"The risk to the public (from a collapse) is zero," he added.

Early reports indicated the turbine fell on a public road. However, Normalville Fire Chief Mark Bigam confirmed it only fell on an access road that is protected by a locked gate.

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Read more: <http://triblive.com/news/fayette/5429447-74/wind-steyer-turbines#ixzz2rFNWWyR1>

Mill Run

Located in Fayette County and built in 2001, the Mill Run Wind Energy Center powers 5,000 homes.

Owner/Operator: FPL Energy

Output: 15 MW

No. of Turbines: 10 (GE 1.5 MW)

Operational Since: November 2001