

# Southern Illinois Residents Overwhelmingly Support Development of the Prairie State Energy Campus

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More than 87 percent of Southern Illinois residents recently polled endorse development of the proposed Prairie State Energy Campus, according to a survey conducted by Public Strategies Inc., based in Washington, D.C. In addition, about 87 percent of surveyed residents who also consider themselves "environmentalists" support project development, the poll reveals.

Prairie State is a planned 1,500 megawatt electric generating plant and coal mine development that would be sited in Washington County, Ill. Prairie State would generate clean, low-cost electricity for 1.5 million families, create hundreds of jobs and revitalize the Illinois economy.

"If this were a political poll, the results of the Prairie State survey would be considered a landslide," said Mark C. Allen, managing director of Public Strategies Inc., based in Washington, D.C. "The poll demonstrates that the community is very supportive of project fundamentals, and the level of support increases as residents learn more about the project."

Public Strategies surveyed 800 residents in Washington, St. Clair, Perry and Randolph counties. The poll has a 3.46 percent margin of error. The project's ability to generate low-cost electricity and its use of state-of-the-art technologies are among the top reasons for support. The survey also found:

- Ninety-four percent of residents believe Prairie State will have a positive impact on the local economy;
- Eighty-four percent of those polled believe Prairie State can be developed in a manner that will protect the environment; and
- Seventy percent recognize Prairie State will positively affect the cost of electricity.

Prairie State obtained its draft permit from Illinois in February and has received more than 700 letters and more than 80 community resolutions voicing support for project development. The public comment period continues until June 21. Supporters can send letters of support by visiting <http://www.prairiestateenergycampus.com/>.

In May, a group of Midwest electricity suppliers signed a letter of intent to become partners in Prairie State and use approximately 500 megawatts of electricity each year. Prairie State intends to move forward with development when the final permitting is complete, the majority of the plant's output is sold and all partners are selected, which could occur as soon as the summer of 2005.

Peabody Energy is the world's largest private-sector coal company, with 2003 sales of 203 million tons and \$2.8 billion in revenues. Its coal products fuel more than 10 percent of all U.S. electricity generation and more than 2.5 percent of worldwide electricity.

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