Georgia is already taking advantage of wind energy. In March 2013, Georgia Power announced a decision to purchase 250 megawatts (MW) of wind energy from Oklahoma—enough to power the equivalent of 50,000 homes a year! Now Georgia has great potential for wind energy development within the state. Advanced wind turbine technology and reduced costs have now made wind energy economically feasible throughout Georgia. A wind project in Georgia could provide beneficial economic development opportunities for local communities.

**Advanced Turbine Technology**
In the past five years, wind turbine technology has greatly evolved. Wind turbine towers can reach up to 459 feet (140) meters in height. Taller turbines and longer blades are capable of capturing more wind, thus harnessing more electricity and reducing wind energy prices. As turbines increase in hub height, Georgia contains a much greater area of land viable for development. Approximately 2,500 MW of onshore wind potential currently exist in Georgia.

**Reduced Costs**
Wind energy is now one the least expensive sources of new power generation in the country. After all, Georgia Power’s decision to purchase wind energy from Oklahoma stemmed from the extremely low cost of energy for Georgia ratepayers.

The chart in the lower corner shows that costs have declined by 39% over the past decade for lower wind speed areas like Georgia (averaging 13.4 miles per hour [6 meters per second]). As technology improves, wind energy prices will continue to drop.

**Economic Development Opportunities**
Georgia is currently home over 20 wind energy-related manufacturing facilities serving the domestic and international wind industry markets. Developing land-based wind in the state could greatly add to local economic benefits and create more wind energy-related jobs.

Based on the Jobs and Economic Development Index model,* developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), developing 1,000 MW worth of wind energy capacity in Georgia could:

- Generate approximately 4,472 full-time equivalent jobs during construction periods with a total payroll of $237 million
- Support approximately 130 ongoing operation jobs with a total annual payroll of $7 million
- Produce approximately $3 million in extra income for farmers/households or others who lease their land to developers

Wind energy is currently an untapped resource in Georgia. Yet, with advanced turbine technology and lower costs, wind energy development could greatly boost Georgia’s economy and provide homegrown and affordable energy.

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*The model was the Jobs and Economic Development Impact (JEDI) model, developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). More information about the JEDI model can be found at: [http://1.usa.gov/XpVcWY](http://1.usa.gov/XpVcWY)

Sources:
Joseph Owen Roberts (September 2013). Presentation, Land-Based Wind Potential Changes in the Southeastern U.S, NREL