

# Golisano ups ante on wind

*Billionaire eyes Hartsville project,  
adding new twist to wind development*

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## WINDpower

HARTSVILLE — Rochester billionaire B. Thomas Golisano stopped in Hartsville Saturday to speak with some residents about the community's windy future.

Golisano and Ed Rechner, a wind farmer from Perry, came to Hartsville resident Steve

Dombert's family farm Saturday. About 10 people attended the meet-

ing, including Hartsville town board members Jim Perry and Mattie Parine.

"Tom Golisano is very interested in the wind turbine issue," Dombert said. "He explained his views and said he has come to feel that in communities that are going to have wind farms, people should consider organizing a public benefit corporation and do the project so that the proceeds after normal opera-



**Golisano**

tional expenses can be distributed directly back to the people of the town."

"I was visiting my alma mater, and I got lost," quipped Golisano, who is an Alfred State College graduate.

Golisano described the three to four meeting as a very productive conversation. He said his primary goal is to get information out to the people. Golisano noted while he has made a financial commitment to a Perry project, it's a little early to discuss the prospects with Hartsville.

"I'm not ready to say I'd do that for Hartsville yet, but if they proceed it could be a possibility," Golisano said.

Golisano also is trying to get the state involved by offering up loans and grants that would encourage local projects.

Town Supervisor Amy Emerson said town officials only recently learned Golisano had an interest in Hartsville.

Turn to 7A

WEDNESDAY  
MARCH 8, 2006

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Continued from 1A

"At this time we don't know all the details," she added, "but are willing to listen at a complete informational meeting presented by Tom and his group."

The news might be surprising to some. Golisano, who helped form Save Upstate New York, has been fairly vocal about his concerns regarding wind development.

Golisano said there is no question there is a group of people who are opposed to wind farming and have legitimate concerns. However, he also said if those issues are dealt with in an appropriate way it looks as if wind farms

are coming to New York and they're here to stay.

"The next question is who owns them," he added.

According to Golisano, wind farm development has brought in an influx of banking firms and other companies that will contribute relatively small amounts of revenue to local communities in the form of Payments in Lieu of Taxes and land leases.

Should the community own a project, the local impact would be much greater, he said.

"Significantly more is an understatement," Golisano added. "It is huge."

In fact, Golisano said studies show during its first 10

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Continued from 1A

3/8/06

years a 2 megawatt turbine generates some \$200,000 in profit. After 11 years, when the unit is paid off, profits rise even higher.

"Any community like Hartsville, Hornellsville or Perry would be smart and wise to take a look at this possibility for the community," he added.

Emerson expects the issue to be raised when the Hartsville town board meets at 7 p.m. today at town hall. However, she cautioned residents all the information is not in.

"I think it was suggested he do a presentation at the school," she said.

Emerson also noted there is currently a project with Airtricity in town and it is moving along. They have contracts with several leaseholders and have no interest in selling

them. The town, she said, has no legal standing on these private contracts.

"Golisano's group is welcome to sign up land owners not currently under contract with Airtricity and apply for a connection to the power grid," Emerson added. "I really think most of the prime locations are already covered. I don't think there's much left that's valuable."

Dombert said a public benefit corporation could work in Hartsville and Hornellsville if people understand the details and demand the town drops Airtricity. He estimates a local project could result in profits of \$3 million to \$5 million a year. After the turbines are paid for, the profits go even higher, he added.

"We propose to give those profits directly to the people of

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Hartsville and Hornellsville," Dombert said. "That would make this a nice place to live.

"Under the present wind farm arrangement, some people have said they intend to leave town, others are expecting substantial declines in their property values as the impact of the wind farm is revealed," he added. "If certain town officials persist in placing the interests of a small group of wind farmers over those of the vast majority of townspeople we will lose."

Dombert said in order to explore this new possibility, the Hartsville town board should Airtricity's plans on hold, as well as a December a resolution involving the Steuben County Industrial Development Agency's role in the project. Dombert expects to meet with Golisano and

Rechberger again. He also is trying to arrange a information session for sometime in mid-April and possibly at Hornell High School.

"I think the prospects are good," Golisano said. "It appears you have a good nucleus of people."

According to Golisano, it's the local people that make the difference. For instance, he said, they must form a board of trustees to make it happen.

"There's a good group of people down there," he added. "They'd be very qualified and capable of doing it."