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Wind turbine manufacturer wants to bring its foreign production to Lockport

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Wind turbines are seen rotating from Woodlawn Beach State Park.

Harry Scull Jr./News file photo

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A manufacturer of mid-sized wind turbines, whose primary components are currently built in India, wants to bring that production back to the United States, using a facility that it hopes to build in Lockport.

Siva Powers America – an Amherst startup owned by Managing Partner and clean-energy engineer Padma Kasthurirangan and VEVA Holdings – is proposing a two-phase development project that would allow it to manufacture its machines locally so it can cater to the domestic U.S. market for clean energy.



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First, it would construct a 10,000-square-foot manufacturing facility on vacant land, where it would assemble the turbines for installation, using nacelles and blades that are now produced in India. That would include 5,000 square feet of space for manufacturing, 2,000 square feet for warehouse, another 2,000 square feet for research and development and 1,000 square feet for offices.

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Then, in the second phase, it would start manufacturing the blades themselves in Lockport, using globally-sourced parts to make components that are up to 50 meters in length.

It also intends to install one of its wind turbines on the property, along with a rooftop solar array, so it can generate all of its power needs using clean energy. That will also lower its energy costs, and allow it to train its employees onsite. Siva expects to create 15 full-time and five part-time jobs within two years, paying salaries of \$35,000 to \$60,000.

The company plans to use a 10-acre vacant site at 1060 Enterprise Drive, which is owned by the Lockport Industrial Development Agency, in a "highly distressed" area. Siva wants to buy the property for \$200,000, with a goal of starting work by April 1 and finishing by April 2024. It will need site plan approval and an area variance for the \$2.52 million project.

But it is also asking the Lockport IDA for more than \$640,000 in tax breaks – including \$580,800 in savings on property taxes, \$38,400 on sales taxes and \$22,200 on mortgage recording taxes. The company is also talking with Invest Buffalo Niagara and Empire State Development Corp. about other assistance, acknowledging that it has looked at out-of-state options because of "easier permitting" and financing elsewhere.

"The financial assistance by the IDA will help us accelerate the deployment of our facility in 2023 to be able to deliver finished product to our U.S. customers by 2024," Kasthurirangan wrote. Otherwise, "the applicant will not be able to manufacture the turbine locally."

Project costs include \$1 million for the construction, \$200,000 in furniture and fixtures, \$150,000 for manufacturing equipment, \$50,000 for infrastructure and \$20,000 in professional fees, plus \$900,000 for installation of the wind turbine and solar array. Funding includes \$2.22 million in bank loans, \$300,000 in company equity, and \$660,000 in federal clean energy tax credits.

Founded in 2020 and currently located out of an office suite at 9260 Transit Road in East Amherst, Siva's primary product is the SIVA 250/50 wind turbine, which Kasthurirangan says is "a proven design meeting the highest internationally accepted certification standards globally and is ideal for Western New York farm and commercial clients fighting rising energy costs."

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I've been a business reporter at The Buffalo News since 2004, now covering residential and commercial real estate and development amid WNY's resurgence. I'm an upstate native, proud to call Buffalo my home, and committed to covering it thoroughly.