

By: Terry A. Stevenson

As we look at what is going on in the county, it seems like most everything is always "just around the corner." I guess one reason it seems so is that most of the things we are looking at that could possibly happen don't happen suddenly, they happen slowly over time. Wind energy development is one of them. There was a great deal of excitement a year ago as we looked forward to good things that were just around the corner for wind development. It just hasn't happened yet. We have had meetings recently with two other companies that intend to put up wind turbines in our county in the future. But again, it is not planned immediately. It may not happen until 2014.

A similar thing has happen with the solid waste burning plant that will convert trash to energy. We looked forward to it with excitement. The fact is that it is still coming to the county; it just won't be here immediately. Some work is already proceeding on it. A location has been secured and some personnel have moved to Platte County to prepare.

We can also look at the Niobrara Oil Play. There have been several public meetings regarding the potential of oil production in our part of the state. That remains a potential, but the actual development may take a little time. The companies typically drill only a few wells to make sure production is adequate before they make huge investments. That may take a few months. The companies will also be very secretive about how much oil they are getting from the first wells they drill so that they can keep an advantage over their competitors.

Another thing that will make oil development in Platte County advance slowly is the fact that most of the drill rigs are operating in the Bakken formation in North Dakota. They will be busy there for quite some time. There will not likely be dozens of rigs here in the county making a sudden appearance. They will likely increase in numbers slowly. This all is somewhat like the story of Goldilocks. We could have all this potential development happen too fast, too slow, or just right. Right now it seems too slow. We hope it doesn't happen too suddenly, because the impact is much more difficult for us to handle. Maybe these things will develop at a just right pace.

Though it may not seem like it, development is occurring in the county. Much of the time now it looks like there is more talk than activity, and that may be true. But there is already a lot of quiet activity taking place. We will be more ready for it than some places around the country have been. We will welcome it as it happens.