



Road split

Cowboys right the ship, down Iowa State 34-27; Sooners upset by K-State, 48-41.

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SUNDAY

Pushed back a year

NextEra's 'largest-of-its-kind' energy project still in talks with Vance AFB

By Mitchell Willetts
Staff Writer

The Skeleton Creek wind farm project, initially planned to be up and running by the end of 2019, has been pushed back by a year as talks over air space between NextEra Energy Resources and Vance Air Force Base continue.

"There's a number of factors ... and certainly our interactions with the Air Force base are very important and a big part of that," NextEra spokesman Bryan Garner said, adding that "other considerations" also contributed to the revised timetable.

The wind farm is now expected to complete sometime late 2020, while the solar farm and energy storage facility, the two other pieces of the three-part Skeleton Creek project, are still on schedule for 2023.

Despite the delay, Garner described the conversations between NextEra and Vance as "productive."

Wind accounts for nearly a third of Oklahoma's energy production, according to the American Wind

Neither Vance AFB nor NextEra have shared what changes will be made to the Skeleton Creek wind farm.

Energy Association. Able to put out 8,072 megawatts through 44 sites, the state ranks third in the nation in production, behind Texas and second-place Iowa.

Meanwhile, the military remains the state's number one employer by far, with an estimated 69,000 residents on Department of Defense payroll. Vance AFB contributes over 2,300 to that total, according to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

With wind business burgeoning, and more turbines towering atop the plains all the time, concerns about air space are bringing industry and defense together at the table to divvy up the sky.

The two began discussions in December 2018. There are several matters Vance has brought to NextEra's attention, including "concerns regarding air traffic control radar blockage, NEXRAD radar impingement, line of sight considerations and traffic pattern obstructions."

The National Weather Service is also weighing in on the negotiations,

according to Vance AFB.

"At this time, the DoD and NextEra continue to fine tune the Skeleton Creek project proposal to mitigate risks to flight and public safety," a statement from the base said.

No Easy Task

"I'm not against wind development, in fact neither is the military. We just don't want it to take away from our mission capability," Mike Cooper, Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission chairman, said.

The goal of the OSMPC, his goal, is in large part to protect and improve the military's ability to train, equip and otherwise prepare for whatever duties are required of it.

Given that much of the military presence in Oklahoma is Air Force, that has meant helping air bases preserve the territory they need to conduct operations.

"If you further degrade your mission capability, guess what? We're not going to have Vance Air Force Base, Altus or Tinker or Fort Sill," Cooper said. "Air space is the number

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Wind turbines stand at the Chisholm View Wind Project in northern Garfield County in this March 12, 2014, file photo. (Billy Hefton / Enid News & Eagle)

Inducted into Okla. Military Hall of Fame

Enid native posthumously honored for heroism during Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

By James Neal
Staff Writer

An Enid native hailed as a hero during the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, was inducted posthumously Saturday into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame.

The late Brig. Gen. Kenneth Taylor was honored as one of two fighter pilots who were the first to get their aircraft into the air and shoot down Japanese planes during the enemy attack, which claimed more than 2,400 American lives.

Taylor was one of 13 veterans honored at the ceremony Saturday at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Norman. The USS Oklahoma and 429 sailors and Marines who died aboard the ship also were memorialized.

Taylor was born in Enid Dec. 23, 1919, and shortly afterward his family moved to Hominy, where he graduated from high school in 1938. He attended the University of Oklahoma as a pre-law student and joined the Army Air Corps two years later.

After completing flight training at Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas, in 1941, he was promoted to second lieutenant and assigned to the 47th Pursuit Squadron at Wheeler Army Airfield, Honolulu,

on the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

On Dec. 6, 1941, Taylor's squadron had been sent temporarily to Haleiwa Field, about 11 miles from Wheeler, for gunnery practice. Taylor spent that night, and well into the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, dancing and playing cards at the officers' club with a fellow second lieutenant and close friend, George Welch, of Delaware.

According to a history provided by the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame, the pair were awakened by the sound of explosions and machine gun fire shortly after 8 a.m., as the first wave of Japanese planes attacked.

Taylor called ahead to Haleiwa Field and ordered two P-40 Warhawks to be fueled and armed, then he and Welch — still wearing their tuxedo trousers from the night before — raced in Taylor's car to the airfield.

Japanese planes strafed the car as they drove to Haleiwa, but the two pilots were unharmed.

Taylor and Welch got airborne without incident. According to a 2001 Air Force Times account, the first planes they spotted were in a formation of unarmed American B-17 bombers flying in from the mainland. But, as they approached a Marine Corps airfield at Ewa, they



Brig. Gen. Kenneth Taylor, born in Enid, was flying a Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, like the one pictured, when the then second lieutenant got airborne and shot down four Japanese planes during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941. Taylor was posthumously inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame in Norman on Saturday. (U.S. Air Force photo provided)

encountered a group of Japanese planes — part of the estimated first wave of 140 aircraft, and 353 Japanese planes that took off from six aircraft carriers in the total attack.

In the Air Force Times interview, Taylor said he and Welch didn't hesitate to attack the Japanese planes,

despite being vastly outnumbered.

"We just got in line with them and started shooting them down, and ultimately ran out of ammunition," Taylor said.

They landed at Wheeler Field, which already had been under attack, to rearm. Senior officers

first ordered Taylor and Welch to disperse and abandon the planes. But when those officers and ground crew scattered in the face of a fresh Japanese attack, Taylor and Welch took the opportunity to

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WEATHER



Today, sunny and mild. East wind at 8-13 mph. Tonight, cold. North wind at 16-23 mph.

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