

# Pantex NEWS

MAINTAINING THE SAFETY, SECURITY AND RELIABILITY OF AMERICA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS STOCKPILE

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## ***B&W Pantex and WTAMU to Study Effects of Wind Energy Projects on Wildlife***

B&W Pantex is partnering with West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) to study the effects of wind turbines and associated infrastructure on wildlife at Pantex. The contract for evaluating the wind farm's effects on wildlife began this past fall and will continue through the next five years.

The Pantex Site Office is in the process of designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining a renewable energy source and its associated distribution infrastructure on Pantex property and nearby land. This makes this research project timely and necessary.

"The project is not only important to Pantex's responsibilities, but is very timely in light of the magnitude of wind energy development that is occurring in the Texas Panhandle," said Jim Ray, B&W Pantex's Wildlife Biologist. "Although there is some information on impacts of wind turbines on birds and bats, Pantex and the wildlife management and research community need comprehensive, defensible information on the effects that wind farms have on wildlife mortality in this region, and whether or not some species will avoid areas with wind farms," he added.

Pantex is delighted that WTAMU's Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences has been contracted to partner in this work. Dr. Raymond Matlack, Associate Professor of Biology, along with Ray will conduct pre-project monitoring and at least four years of post-construction monitoring on the effects of installed wind farm infrastructure on wildlife. The study will focus on birds and bats in our region.

The research is very much needed, and gives WTAMU wildlife students experience with fieldwork on major issues facing the Texas Panhandle, the wind energy industry, as well as development of green energy in general, said Matlack. "Both undergraduate and graduate students will be involved in all aspects of the research and will benefit greatly from the experience," he said. "This project is unique because it provides students with skills they are unable to gain from other projects in progress at WTAMU." Wind energy has become such a large industry that these experiences are vital in today's job market.

"Both WTAMU and Texas Tech University hold a good track record in working with us on Pantex wildlife projects," said Ray. "We've received solid results, and working in the Pantex environment gives students a pretty unique experience that would be hard for students to get elsewhere in the region."

# The logo for Pantex NEWS. The word "Pantex" is written in a large, bold, red, italicized sans-serif font. A white orbital ring with a small grey sphere at its center orbits the letter "P". The word "NEWS" is written in a smaller, bold, black, sans-serif font to the right of "Pantex".

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B&W Pantex has contracted with these universities in collaborative studies that have included research on invertebrates (spiders, insects, etc.), amphibians, reptiles, birds, prairie dogs, burrowing owls, bobcats and, now, wind farms and wildlife.

Matlack holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology (Kansas State University, 1994), Masters of Science degree in Biology (KSU, 1997), and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biology (KSU, 2001). Matlack has worked at WTAMU since 2002 and has conducted research on ringtail, porcupines, bats, bobcats, small mammals, and birds since arriving in the Panhandle.

Ray holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Range and Wildlife Management (Texas Tech, 1987) and a Master of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences (South Dakota State University, 1990). A native of the region (Dalhart), Ray is a twenty-year veteran of the Panhandle's wildlife management and research community. The first half of his career was with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and he has been with Pantex since 1999.

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B&W Pantex manages and operates the Pantex Plant near Amarillo, Texas, for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration.

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