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## Federal money on the way to shore up the Great Lakes: Whatever happened to ... ?

By [Plain Dealer staff](#)

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### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO -- 2009 IN REVIEW

*The Plain Dealer catches up with stories of 2009 in a year-end series of "Whatever happened to . . . ?" pieces running through Jan. 4. The weekly edition of the feature, which appears on Mondays and updates stories from the previous year and beyond, will resume Jan. 11.*

#### Whatever happened to the lakefront wind turbines in Sheffield Lake?

"They're operating as advertised," said Bill Gardner, grants coordinator of the Lorain County community. "The city's happy with them."

The two 45-foot-tall windmills were installed in June next to the parking lot at the year-old community boat launch on Lake Road. Designed for homeowners or businesses looking to reduce or eliminate electric bills, they have rotors 12 feet in diameter.

They were expected to generate about 1,100 kilowatt-hours a month. The average home consumes 800 to 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month, according to contractor Lake Erie Electric.

"We linked them directly into the [FirstEnergy] grid, and we have a reversing meter," Gardner said. "When we put in power, we get credit. It's a relatively simple system.

"When we go to a bigger one, we'll be able to provide ourselves with the power we need for all our operations at the shopping center." That's the Shoreway Shopping Center, across the street from the turbines, which was bought by the city last year and is planned as a mixed-use town center.

"Our goal is to have a clean, green, renewable center," Gardner said. "We need more power to do that."

Sheffield Lake's was one of the region's first public wind-power projects. Demand has grown so much that Westlake-based Lake Erie Electric, the primary contractor for the job, has since started a separate renewable-energy division to handle wind and solar systems from design to installation.

"I don't think we're going to replace power plants with them," Gardner said of the turbines, "but I think they will have value as point-source power. We will reduce costs. And we wanted to make our city more green. For every kilowatt of power we produce, we save one pound of carbon into the atmosphere. I'm proud of the city."

-- *Tom Feran*