



## **Tower Producer Martifer Gets Help Entering U.S. Market via JV**

Through a newly announced joint venture that will produce wind towers, one company is contributing wind industry expertise and the other is providing U.S. experience and market familiarity.

Portuguese wind tower and gear box producer Martifer Energy Systems is teaming up with Hirschfeld Industries, a U.S. manufacturer of structural steel components for multiple industries, in a joint venture that will establish a new wind tower plant in San Angelo, Texas, where Hirschfeld is already based. The joint venture, which will be named Martifer-Hirschfeld Energy Systems, LLC, will be equally held by each company.

The \$40 million plant, which is to result in the creation of 225 jobs, was originally initiated by Martifer. The first \$30 million will go toward completion of an initial phase of the facility, which is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2010. By 2013 the factory is expected to have a production capacity of 400 towers a year.

The companies noted that Martifer-Hirschfeld Energy Systems brings together the expertise of Martifer Group in the manufacturing of wind power components with the local footprint and extensive experience in infrastructure fabrication of Hirschfeld.

“Hirschfeld brings a lot of expertise to this project, [and] they are based in San Angelo so they have extensive local and market knowledge, and that will speed up the startup process,” said Ant3nio Pontes, CEO of Martifer Energy Systems. “This will allow us to fully benefit from the strong development of the wind power sector we are witnessing in the U.S. right now.”

Dennis Hirschfeld, CEO of Hirschfeld Industries, said his company had been watching and studying the wind tower and equipment market before ultimately making the decision to enter the wind industry. “We found the right partner, at the right time, to enter this market, and we look forward to capitalizing on our U.S. ‘know-how,’ as well as on Martifer Energy Systems’ globally respected name as an excellent supplier to the wind industry,” he said.

Martifer Energy Systems produces towers, coverings, and gearboxes for wind turbines. Through a joint venture with German wind turbine producer REpower Systems AG, Martifer assembles REpower-designed wind turbines in Portugal. Hirschfeld, one of the largest fully integrated fabricators of engineered structural steel components in North America, fabricates more than 100,000 tons of steel annually.

*Source: Wind Energy Weekly, 26 June 2009*