County assessor reports spike in home and property values near Calhan wind farm

By: **Ryan Maye Handy (/author/Ryan+Maye+Handy)** February 18, 2016 • Updated: February 18, 2016 at 9:09 pm

A wind farm near the Paint Mines Interpretive Park is pictured on Tuesday, December 29, 2015. Photo by Stacie Scott, The Gazette

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Eastern El Paso County is doing land-office business when it comes to home sales near a massive wind farm, according to report given to the commissioners Tuesday by Assessor Steve Schleiker.

Despite outspoken fears from many residents that the wind farm near Calhan would damage their property values, the assessor has reported a dramatic spike in home and property values based on a study of two year's worth of real estate sales in the area. The collective value of more than 700 sales made in 2015 alone is more than $181.1 million - at least $40 million more than the current market value listed for those properties, Schleiker said.

The wind farm, owned by NextEra Energy Resources, has more than 145 wind turbines that stretch across the plains of Calhan. The company also erected a controversial above-ground 29-mile powerline, which the commissioners approved in February 2015.

Schleiker will be using some of the data, from sales between July 1, 2014 through June, 30 2016, to complete his 2017 reappraisal of property values.

"We still have five more months of sales data to include for this reappraisal," Schleiker told the commissioners, according to a news release. "But I can tell you that there is a good deal of sales activity occurring in the wind farm area and we are seeing increases in both the mean and median prices."

Even greater increases in value were seen in sales of 30 parcels of grazing land. All properties went for $5.4 million, around $3.7 million above their current market value. Vacant land sales were also up by more than a million, Schleiker reported.

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