

# W.I.S.E. ABOUT WEST TEXAS WIND

*Andy Swift at  
Texas Tech's  
Wind Power  
Museum*

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Bob Dylan said the answer is blowin' in the wind, but you don't have to tell Andy Swift that.

Swift, the director of Texas Tech's Wind Science and Engineering Research Center (WISE), is always on the lookout for ways that wind may better serve communities while seeking to protect people and property from extreme wind events.

"All wind is not the same," says Swift. "Tornado wind characteristics are different from hurricane wind characteristics. We look at wind from an interdisciplinary standpoint and address the technologic and economic aspects of wind storms and wind power applications, including our newest—wind-powered water desalination systems."

The center deployed researchers to place wind instrumentation preceding the landfall of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the Gulf Coast (see "Taken by Storm" pg 24).

As for seeking positive uses, the program aggressively explores ways to use wind to address the region's water problems. Researchers here will contribute to an initiative to create an integrated wind-water desalination system. Committed partners on the project include General Electric Co., the U.S. Department of Energy, Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, and the Reese Technology Center.

"This initiative takes advantage of the growing evidence that wind turbines are positioned to provide the least expensive power in the world," Swift says. "A system like this has the potential to cut the cost of power and energy required to operate a water desalination system in half."

WISE was founded in 1970 following a devastating twister that ravaged downtown Lubbock, killing 26 people and causing over \$100 million of damage.

— MICHAEL CASTELLON

