

Mariah Power Gets a Gust of Financing

The small-wind turbine maker grabs \$500,000 to get its spire-shaped turbines onto the market.

by: Rachel Barron

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Small-wind turbine startup Mariah Power has raised \$500,000, CEO Mike Hess told Greentech Media this week.

The investment, from [Greenhouse Capital Partners](#) and [Big Sky Partners](#), brings Mariah's total capital to \$1.25 million. Last year, the Reno, Nev.-based company raised \$750,000 in angel funding led by the [Sierra Angels](#) and the Keiretsu Forum (see [Cleantech Investing post](#)).

Hess said Mariah will spend the latest chunk of change on manufacturing 50 models of its first product, a small-wind turbine for the residential and commercial markets called Windspire.

Hess said Mariah is seeking more cash and expects to close a round in the range of \$5 million to \$10 million by June.

Unlike larger traditional wind turbines that use propellers similar to those on airplanes to generate electricity, Mariah Power uses a 30-foot-tall spire that has a 2-foot radius.

Hess expects to begin shipping the first Windspires around April 18.

So far the company has 1,200 preorders for the device, which produces about 1,800 kilowatt-hours per year in 11 mph average winds. By Mariah's calculations, the company's turbine is capable of generating a third of the electricity for a U.S. single-family home.

The Windspire will have a price tag of \$3,995, with installation adding another \$1,000.

Without government incentives, most customers will see a return on their investment, in the form of lower electricity bills, in about 10 years -- about half the expected life of the turbine, Hess said.

With government assistance, which can vary from state to state, the financial dynamic can change greatly. For example, customers in California could see a payback in 4.2 years, Hess said.

Although it hasn't received as much attention or financial support as large-scale wind, small wind has been gaining more traction.

Companies like [Marquiss Wind Power](#), which raised \$1.3 million in its first round of financing in January, and [Southwest Windpower](#), which was named one of the 100 fastest-growing energy companies by [Inc.com](#) last year, also are vying for a big piece of the small-wind action.



Source: Mariah Power

Mariah Power's spiral-shaped wind turbine can produce a third of a U.S. single-family home's electricity.

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