Both Roy Pfaltzgraff III and Paul Mailander are emerging as forerunners in the up and coming industry of wind energy. Although individuals have been harnessing the power of wind for more than a century, a recent spike of interest in the concept has led Pfaltzgraff to become a wind turbine dealer and Mailander to have a turbine installed at his residence.

Currently, there are few options for individuals who wish to have their own wind turbine. In fact, running into this problem was what inspired Pfaltzgraff to look into becoming a dealer in the first place. A few years ago, when he was looking to have a turbine installed, he found only distant, impersonal service and high prices. Hoping to make wind energy more accessible for those around Haxtun, he became the first dealer in the area.

Mailander also developed his interest in renewable energy a couple years back. Working on a project that investigated wind energy as possible revenue for the school district, he became acquainted with the processes and advantages of wind energy.

Although the project did not produce any plans for the school, Mailander could not ignore what he had learned. He has been making plans to use wind energy for himself ever since.

One of the biggest parts of the process, said Mailander, was waiting. Before beginning work on a wind turbine, Mailander waited for the net metering bill to be passed. Now, just over a year since the bill was passed, Mailander is the proud owner of a turbine.

Even now that the turbine is standing, Mailander is still waiting. The work they have been doing, noted Pfaltzgraff, is very new. Before the turbine can function, they are waiting for an inverter to be finished.

Anyone who begins working on a turbine can expect to face some amount of waiting, as the technology is in high demand. Many, in fact, are waiting on a turbine that fits their needs to even be developed. It should happen soon though, said Pfaltzgraff. “It’s just a matter of time before there are wind turbines all around this area,” he said.

Wind has always been there, and always will be, and the future for wind energy looks very promising. Located in an area of the country that is exceptionally windy, nearby colleges have begun offering degrees in wind energy, and companies are continuing to grow.

Pfaltzgraff noted the Holyoke area seems very eager to pursue wind energy options. Many farmers, for example, are looking into it. Highline Electric, he said, has responded to renewable energy in a much more positive manner than most of the places he’s seen.

Since wind technology is so new, both Pfaltzgraff and Mailander believe this turbine will allow others to see how it works and the economics of it, allowing people to move forward on their own projects with confidence.

Another advantage to Mailander’s turbine is monitoring software. The software will allow them to analyze wind and power production. Having a turbine in the area will give actual production numbers, whereas in the past the numbers were extrapolated from wind maps.

The 120 ft. wind turbine at Mailander’s has a 20 kw generator. It is expected to provide part, but not all of the power to his home. Once his turbine is fully functional, Mailander said he doesn’t think he’ll mind those windy Holyoke days so much.