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Ellwood City Ledger

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Green energy offers stable income for farmers

Keeping farms alive

For landowners, wind turbines often mean stable lease payments. Those historically were around \$3,000 to \$5,000 per turbine per year, with some modern agreements \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually, secured through 20- to 30-year contracts.

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Paul Mwebaze University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | THE CONVERSATION

Drive through the plains of Iowa or Kansas and you'll see more than rows of corn, wheat and soybeans. You'll also see towering wind turbines spinning above fields and solar panels shining in the sun on barns and machine sheds.

For many farmers, these are lifelines. Renewable energy provides steady income and affordable power, helping farms stay viable when crop prices fall or drought strikes. But some of that opportunity is now at risk as the Trump administration cuts federal support for renewable energy.

Wind power brings steady income for farms

Wind energy is a significant economic driver in rural America. In Iowa, for example, over 60% of the state's electricity came from wind energy in 2024, and the state is a hub for wind turbine manufacturing and maintenance jobs.

For landowners, wind turbines often mean stable lease payments. Those historically were around \$3,000 to \$5,000 per turbine per year, with some modern agreements \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually, secured through 20- to 30-

year contracts.

Nationwide, wind and solar projects contribute about \$3.5 billion annually in combined lease payments and state and local taxes, more than a third of it going directly to rural landowners.

The Sustainably Co-locating Agricultural and Photovoltaic Electricity Systems project, led by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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In 2024, 93% of all new electricity generating capacity was wind, solar or energy storage, and the U.S. Energy Information Administration expected a similar percentage in 2025 as of June.

Beaver County native attended 'March on Washington'

Timothy Cox
Special to The Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

CANTON, OHIO – On Aug. 6, the Rev. Raphael "Ray" Cox of Canton, Ohio, celebrated his 80th birthday.

The former Beaver Falls resident also reflected on attending the iconic "March on Washington for Jobs for Freedom," held in Washington, D.C., 62 years ago on Aug. 28, 1963.

At the time, the pastor was an unemployed 18-year-old graduate of Beaver Falls High School, contemplating his future aspirations.

He recently reflected on what's now considered a unique life-impacting opportunity.

By late summer 1963, Cox was

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