



## 2 shuttered Snowflake power plants purchased



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PHOENIX (AP) -- Two shuttered power plants near the small eastern Arizona town of Snowflake have been purchased by a company controlled by Arizona state Sen. Bob Worsley, sending an economic lifeline to the town hurt by the job losses associated with the shutdowns.

The 24-megawatt Snowflake Power Plant will employ 35 workers and will be producing power by early next week, Worsley said Tuesday. Another 65 workers will be needed to supply the forest products that the biomass plant burns.

The connected 80-megawatt coal-fired plant will either be converted to natural gas or get new low-emission technology before restarting.

"It will not be restarted in its current configuration," Worsley said.

Worsley's Nova Power LLC also bought 7,000 acres around the plants that include a landfill for plant ashes. He and local investors put up \$12 million to restart the plants.

Worsley developed the biomass plant 10 miles west of Snowflake in 2008 and sold it in 2010. Both power plants were built as part of a complex adjacent to the Catalyst Paper Mill, which was shut down by its Canadian owners last year amid low newsprint prices.

The paper mill is being torn down, but Town Manager Paul Watson said the jobs being returned to the power plants are a big deal in Snowflake, which has a population of 5,500. The closure of all three plants cost the region about 400 jobs.

"In a small community like this, 100 jobs is a big deal," Watson said. "It would be like an Intel in Chandler."

If the 80-megawatt power plant restarts, another 70 jobs would be created, Worsley said.

Worsley, a Republican who founded the advertising magazine SkyMall, said he has 10 year agreements to sell power to Arizona Public Service and Salt River Project. That revenue stream will help the plants turn a profit.

The benefits for the surrounding communities and for metropolitan Phoenix are manifold, Worsley said. In addition to helping provide clear power and jobs, the forest thinning projects that will supply the power plant will protect eastern Arizona towns from devastating forest fires and allow more water to run off into dams that supply the Phoenix area.

Nova Power bought the assets of two of three companies that were created when the plants shut down and were liquidated. Because the two power plants were connected, it would have been expensive to separate them, Worsley said.

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