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GARDEN CITY (AP) — Providing standby emergency medical services while a wind farm is under construction is turning into a money maker for a western Kansas county.

The Garden City Telegram reports that Finney County has received about \$245,180 since signing a contract in March with Renewable Energy Systems Americas Inc., the general contractor for the Buffalo Dunes wind farm.

County administrator Randy Partington said revenues are at least meeting and possibly exceeding estimates. Initial estimates indicate the county could see up to \$175,000 in profit by the end of the contract, depending on how many hours EMS was on the site.

“The commission would not have agreed to do this for the wind farm if we were going to lose money at county taxpayers’ expense,” Partington said. “But I think we probably have done better than what was expected.”

Partington said he hopes to use some of the money to pay for a string of ambulance repairs and possibly a new ambulance.

RES and TradeWind Energy, the developer, are building 135 wind turbines for the 250-megawatt Buffalo Dunes wind farm, which will cover more than 40,000 acres of land in Finney, Haskell and Grant counties by the time it is completed. Work started in April.

The contract called for one regular EMS employee to staff the office whenever work was under way at the site, on 12- and 24-hour shifts through the end of January 2014.

County Commission Chairman Dave Jones said the contract was an opportunity to help neighboring counties that didn't have the manpower or equipment to provide that service.

"It was a neighborly thing to do, and it turned out financially to be somewhat rewarding, so all in all I'm pleased," Jones said.

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