

City wants to spread renewable energy awareness



France (Paris).- The historical Seine River in Paris will receive an installment of eight turbines underneath the city's bridges in an effort to raise energy from river currents.

A majority of the machinery used to harness the currents will be underwater with the exception of some modern hydro-mill prototypes that will be placed above water. According to Paris authorities, the addition of the turbines is intended to raise awareness of renewable energy more so than power the city. So far, Paris has already begun installing mini-windmills on buildings and also heating the buildings with water from underground springs.

"We're not expecting the moon and the stars with these techniques," said Denis Baupin, the deputy mayor. "But the educational impact of these experiments is just as important. Velib, Paris' free bicycle scheme, has made Parisians realize they can use cycles in the city, and these renewable energy schemes will make them aware of the need to watch what they consume."

According to Baupin, four sites for the turbines, or hydroliennes, have been selected. A study by a local urban ecology service and the French waterways has concluded that one of the turbines should be placed to the west of the city at the Pont du Garigliano, and the other seven should be placed in central Paris, two a piece, at the Pont de la Tournelle, Pont Marie and Pont au Change.

"At these places, the current speeds up a little," said Baupin. "The idea is to locate all the natural power sources that we have in Paris and that we might be able to exploit."

There have been mixed reviews from local citizens regarding the installation of these eight turbines. Some voiced their approval, and hope that renewable energy will be an important asset to the local fishing community and to local authorities as well. Others had mixed feelings on the issue, saying that this seemed like a good idea in the beginning, but could turn out to be "ridiculous" because of the lack of energy produced. Of course, on the other end of the spectrum, there are those who are dead set against the turbines.

"We're going to throw a fortune into useless hydroliennes," said a city local. "Their cost will be considerably higher than the electricity produced. All that to be 'educational'?"

Paris city hall will send out an appeal this week allowing any power companies interested in the job to come forward with "suitable projects" for installing the turbines. These companies have

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until the fall to submit ideas, and the winner will be chosen in January. If everything goes to plan, the city hopes to install the first turbines by next spring.