PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Halus Power Systems employees Fidel Perez and Daniel Donate tied down the wind turbine so it could be trucked to Kansas last week.

By Jim Knowles

San Leandro Times

A company in San Leandro makes wind turbines for electricity and sometimes their customers are so far out in the boonies that they're off the grid, such as a remote Alaskan village.

But a wind turbine left town by truck last week destined for one of the most unusual customers. The turbine will power an underground village of luxury condominiums being built in former missile silos in Kansas.

Four people from Halus Power Systems in San Leandro went to Kansas to help install the wind turbines.

"This will power the condos being built along with solar panels," said Halus General Manager Louis Rigaud.

Halus's customers include farms, businesses and schools, as well as those in remote areas. The company builds the wind turbines, or rebuilds used turbines, and sometimes installs them too, depending on the customer.

"This is a good, green company for our city," said former City Councilman Howard Kerr, who lives nearby and came to watch the turbine leave by truck for Kansas.

The towers for the turbines are tapered, so the can be taken apart, and the smaller sections fit inside the bigger base, making them easier to transport. The blades also fit inside the hollow tower, so the entire turbine assembly fits on one truck.

While the big rig was being loaded, engineers and technicians made the final adjustments on the generators and control systems inside the building. The controls even have an internet connection so the turbines can be run from anywhere.

"So if there's a tornado, you can log in and stop the machine," Rigaud said.

Without wind turbines, people in remote areas such as Alaskan villages run diesel generators to make electricity.

“They run the diesel generators 24 hours a day,” Rigaud said. “That’s the furthest from green as you can get.”

Halus is also planning on installing a wind turbine for its own power on its property out at the end of Grant Avenue by the bay.