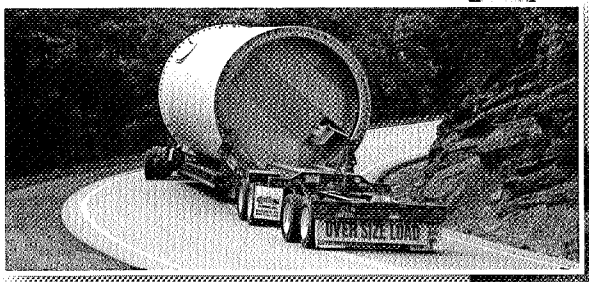

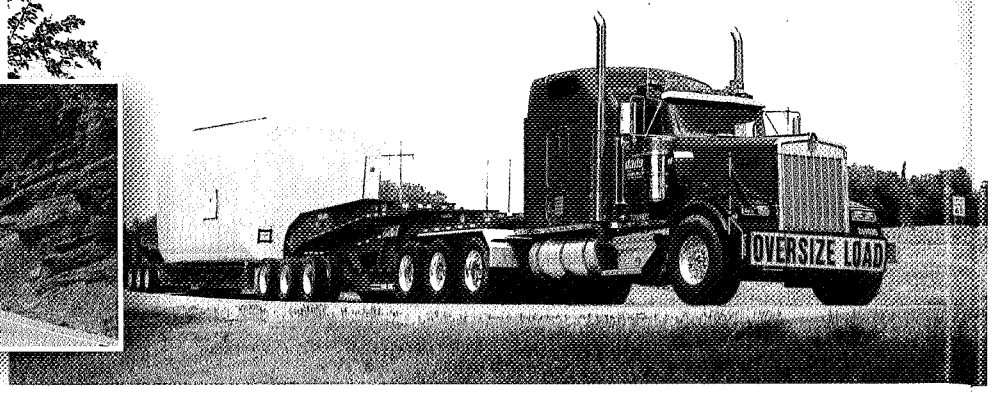

Blades of glory,

The transport of windmills **from the factories** in which they are made **to the wind farms** on which they will be erected has become a **new avenue of growth** for the business of specialized transport. **D.Ann Shiffler** reports

Horizons throughout North America are being transformed with the erection of ever twirling white windmills that are generating power for the masses. While wind power is not new, its popularity has surged as the quest for "clean" fuels becomes a global priority.

Investment in wind energy in the US has grown substantially over the past decade, creating new avenues of business for the manufacturers of windmills as well as ancillary businesses in the realm of cranes and transport.

A key element of wind farm development is assuring prompt, safe and timely transport of the necessary components. Wind power transport is an "extremely busy and very active" market for many specialized transport companies, according to Mark Eyer, national accounts manager for Daily Express Inc. The company had as many as 60 trucks moving all types of wind tower components throughout the US on any given day this summer.

"Some of these trucks are moving nacelles that weigh from 120,000 pounds to 160,000 pounds, while others are handling windmill blades that are 128 plus feet long, and others are handling tower sections of all sizes," he says. "[We are] handling hubs and other needed items to support the rigging crews on a wind site."

Wind power transport is extremely busy right now, as the construction schedules for erection of wind turbines primarily occurs from March through November in most of the US due to weather conditions, Eyer explains. "Only the southwest US market sees year round construction of wind farms."

Eyer says Daily Express has transported wind components to every geographical area of the nation as well as in both eastern and western Canada. "Wind power seems to have no boundaries right now," he says.

The strongest areas for wind farm development include Texas and the upper Midwest, and these areas "are very strong for every carrier right now in the business," he says. "The only area of the US not seeing some type of wind tower installation is the Southeast. The Southeast is a major manufacturing point though for windmill components, so a large portion of the freight originates in this area."

While the business of transporting windmill components is strong, not just every carrier aspires to specialize in such work. Eyer says that the transport of the components is very complex, and requires specific trailers for each component.

"The drivers handling the loads have to be among the best in our fleet, and familiar with the trailer they are pulling and the routes they are traveling," he says. "The drivers are assigned a particular piece of the wind tower, and handle the same piece throughout a project."

Additionally, the sheer size of the components and the remote locations of wind farms mean that in many cases the loads are not on interstate highways for the entire trip.

Transport companies have engineered a variety of different equipment to haul

Due to their weight, some manufacturers' nacelles require 13 axles for safe hauling