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Weapons to Wind

A decommissioned South Carolina warehouse that was once one of the Navy's key supply bases is being redeveloped into one of the biggest wind-turbine testing facilities at a cost of \$98 million.

An arm of Clemson University has started redeveloping the 82,000-square-foot complex, which sits on a 6.3-acre parcel at North Charleston on South Carolina's south coast, with a plan to have it fully operating by the end of 2012. It will be built at the Charleston Naval Complex, built during World War II and decommissioned in 1995. The Energy Department last year awarded the university a \$45 million grant to develop the facility.

"One of the nation's largest deep-water shipping facilities is literally a baseball's throw away," says John Kelly, executive director of Clemson's Restoration Institute. "This is ideal because the turbines of the future will be too big to be transported by land."

The world's biggest wind turbines deliver 7.5 megawatts per hour but the new facility would be built to test turbine drive trains that deliver as much as 15 megawatts (enough energy to power 4,500 homes) and weigh up to 400 tons and are up to 43 feet wide.

—Anthony Klan