

Rio Micropower in West Mersea. Jerry Cotter with a control panel which forms part of any installation



Generate green power to fuel your business

Installing equipment to generate the electricity to run your business, and even sell a little back to the national grid, makes not just commercial sense but will also go a long way to reducing your carbon footprint and showing your green credentials. **SHELINE CLARKE** went to West Mersea to meet **HOWARD PAYNE**, managing director of Rio Micropower, a company which can help you do just that



Howard Payne

RIO Micropower represents a new venture for engineer Howard Payne. In July this year, his company Rio Water Engineering joined forces with Irish company Micropower in order to serve a potentially huge market to provide and install wind turbines and photovoltaic (PV) Panels to commercial and domestic premises. Micropower, under the leadership of managing director Jerry Cotter, has traded in Ireland for 20 years, the last eight of which has established the company as one of the country's principal green energy suppliers, having installed countless wind and solar PV Panels. Howard's company has until now has been involved in water industry installations and maintenance contracts. The combination of solid mechanical and electrical engineering knowledge gives Rio Micropower an exceptional pedigree.

"Rio Micropower represents a diversification for us," said Howard. "The water industry is cyclical and we wanted to develop a new area that would complement that. It is now possible, with the equipment

we provide, to harness the energy of the sun and the wind to generate power in your home, business, school or community centre; the equipment will pay for itself in 10 years and you will be able to then enjoy free electricity for years to come. The potential in the green energy industry is massive and we are very pleased to be moving into that area."

Rio Micropower only supply the best quality German and British products including Braun Antaris wind turbines and rectifiers, Abbacus masts, Schott and Sovello PV Panels and SMA inverters. The company is a member of Real Assurance and approved by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). Real Assurance provides the customer with confidence that the installation contractor is prepared to operate under an approved and regulated code of conduct, while MCS certification is required in order for the customer to obtain their Feed in Tariff after installation.

Thanks to the Government's Clean Energy Cashback Scheme or Feed in Tariff,

anyone with microgeneration equipment installed will receive up to 41.3p per kilowatt hour (the industry standard measure) for solar generated power or 34.5p kilowatt hour for wind generated power guaranteed whether you the power is used or sent to the grid.

What is more, the power sent to the grid gives a further 3p and not using the electricity you would normally have consumed can save a further 12p per kilowatt hour.

"This can represent a 5-8% return on your investment and it is index linked," said Howard. "People need to be aware, however, that these rates are only going to apply for a few years; revisions will be made in 2012 so it's crucial to invest soon. Quality equipment and skilful installation will give you a reliable service life of 25 years."

Rio Micropower has installed both a wind turbine and PV Panels on a property near its West Mersea head quarters. The wind turbine is mounted on a 15 metre steel mast, one set of PV Panels is on an



Pictured above Howard Payne, left, and Jerry Cotter in front of their ground solar panels. Left, Solar panels in use on the roof. Right, a wind turbine installed by Rio Micropower

outbuilding roof and the other is at ground level. Anyone interested is welcome to inspect the site, by appointment.

“The whole installation provides 5,700 kilowatt hours in a year which is about half the power used in that house.

“We can help you further manage what happens to the electricity to make sure you are getting the best deal.”

This is taken care of by EMMA, an Energy and Microgenerator Manager. Rio Micropower is the sole distributor of EMMA in East Anglia, a system which increases the rate of return on a micro generator by controlling what you send to the grid.

“Instead of getting the additional 3p for exporting the power, it may be that it could be used more cost effectively within the property for heating domestic water systems or swimming pools or for supplying green energy equipment such as heat pumps. If you are operating a farm or small manufacturing operation with either spare roof space or unused land, so long as it is in an appropriate location, spare energy could be routed to dry grain, to heat animal breeding units or any form of production where power is needed to heat material.

“I think there is huge potential for small farms, for schools, councils and even

community halls and other communal buildings as grants are available towards the initial outlay. The government and local councils are embracing this technology which makes the whole process simpler when it comes to getting planning permission and making sure we find the most suitable solution.

“New build is also a potentially huge market with new guidelines coming in which demand a certain level of sustainability in new buildings by 2012.

“It is very early days for us but this market is growing and we have spent the time to gain the correct accreditations and to make sure we supply the best equipment, much of which has a very strong proven track record throughout Europe. Britain is behind it's neighbours on this. East Anglia is perhaps the best location in the UK for the production of green energy, which makes this an exciting development for us and we look forward to working on commercial, domestic and community buildings to help them generate their own power and get the most from it.”

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