

# Curry County



Public Entity:.....Curry County  
Project Type:.....HVAC, Insulation  
Stimulus Funds: ...\$52,500  
Savings/yr: .....\$2,021

## County in financial distress thankful for energy projects

The headline in the October 14, 2010 edition of the *Curry County Reporter* says it all: "Panel paints bleak financial future."

Curry County, with its beautiful Southern Oregon beach scenery and acres of lush federal and state forest land, is close to insolvency.

The low property taxes, tough economic environment and drastic reduction in federal timber receipts have caused the county to cut services and staff to the core.



**Curry County's North Annex in Port Orford will get a new heat pump with stimulus funds. The building often gets so hot in the summer, that the County closes it on very hot days for concerns for staff health.**

A ramp-down provision for the federal Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-

Determination Act has led to Curry County receiving only 72 percent of federal timber receipts for 2010-2011. The County will receive only 45 percent for 2011-2012 fiscal year and 0 percent in 2012-13 and after. The county's reserve fund is being rapidly depleted to make up the difference. That, too, will soon be gone.

When the Oregon Department of Energy announced that Curry County would receive two State Energy Program (SEP) awards for energy projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds, it was very good news for the county whose future is in question.

"We really tried to get the most 'bang for our buck' with these energy projects," said Dave Sanders, Facility Maintenance Coordinator for the past five years for the county.

The county will use the \$52,500 in awards toward two insulation and heating system projects at the county's North and South Annex buildings. Both projects will reduce future energy costs and provide savings that can go towards basic services.

The county's North Annex, a 1,910 square-foot building in Port Orford, is heated with electric wall heaters and has no floor insulation. The county's South Annex in Brookings, a 3,300 square-foot building, has a flat roof, no floor insulation and is also heated with electric wall heaters. The buildings are very costly to heat.

Both buildings are divided into numerous offices that are used by county Human Services agencies. Staff use auxiliary plug-in electric heaters in the larger meeting room. There is no air conditioning and the office layouts make it difficult to get any cross-ventilation with open windows. The Southern Oregon coast can get very hot in the summers, causing the county to have to "close shop" to avoid occupant heat stroke if the buildings get overly warm.

The SEP awards help pay a portion of new energy efficient heat pumps that will both heat and cool the buildings. The heat pump and insulation installation cost \$30,500 for the North Annex. The SEP award will cover \$20,500 and the county will contribute \$10,000. The cost for the South Annex will total \$57,000 with the SEP award contributing \$32,000 and the county paying \$25,000.

Local contractors, Gold Beach Refrigeration and Heating in Curry County and Chambers Plumbing and Heating of Coos Bay in neighboring Coos County, performed the

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- Dave Sanders  
Curry County Facilities

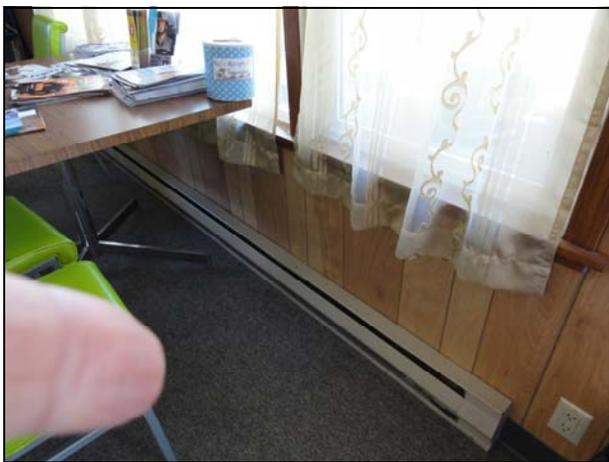


work.

“We wanted to keep the contracts and money local,” Sanders said.

He expects the projects will lower energy use considerably. The savings are expected to be \$850 for the North Annex and \$1,171 for the South Annex each year the buildings are in operation. The savings will be more if electricity rates increase.

For distressed Curry County, it's some good news when there isn't much in the local paper.



***Curry County will replace inefficient baseboard electric heat with a more efficient heat pump system in its North Annex in Port Orford.***



***Dave Sanders, Curry County Facilities Maintenance Coordinator, left, confers with Oregon Department of Energy Project Manager Shanda Shribbs on some of the documentation required with a federal grant.***



***The Curry County North Annex has no air conditioning and little cross ventilation. Box fans supplied limited relief during hot summer days. The new heat pump system will provide air conditioning and heating for staff and clients***

The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) awarded this energy project American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds through the State Energy Program. These funds are designated for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The U.S. Department of Energy administers the funds, approves the projects and reviews the state's progress. The Oregon Department of Energy has \$42.1 million in SEP funding. All projects must be completed by February 15, 2012.

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