



Energy-efficient lighting bright spot for underfunded school

Some call it the Oregon Coast's "Banana Belt." The City of Port Orford is at the northern tip of the Banana Belt that heads south along the Oregon coastline to California. It is the warm spot on Oregon's coast.

Despite a declining economy in Curry County, Port Orford has maintained a population of 1,150 residents in the past 20 years, in part due to retirees who are attracted to its Banana Belt weather. The Port Orford-Langlois School District, however, has lost students during that time period.

"Families are leaving," said Brenda Culley, business manager for the Port Orford-Langlois School District. "It's such a beautiful place, but there are just no jobs."

The school district serves 300 students. Port Orford-Langlois' Pacific High School currently has 120 students in grades 9-12.

With a shrinking student population and a low property rate in Curry County, the School District has a minimal budget for any facility improvements.

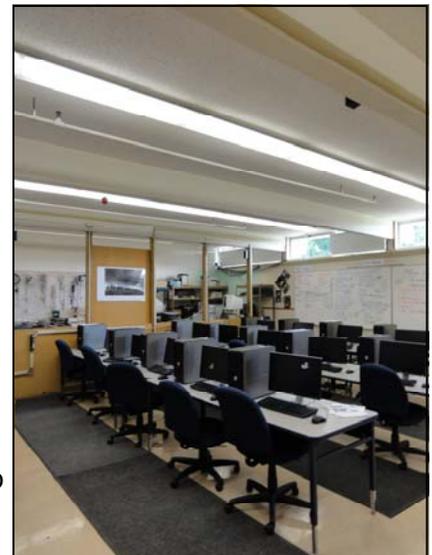
But due to a coastal gale storm in December 2007 that resulted in considerable damage to Pacific High, insurance proceeds paid for repair and renovation of the north wing of the high school building. The renovated wing had much improved T-8 lighting compared to the rest of the building with its low-efficiency fixtures that produced poor quality light.

"The difference in the old and new lights was very noticeable where the hallway of the renovated wing joined the old part of the building," said Mick Lane, superintendent.

"In addition, our old lights were so old, we

were at the point where we couldn't get replacements for them," said Lane.

Lane was quick to respond to the Oregon Department of Energy's request for lighting-only applications for the State Energy Program (SEP) in February 2010. The Department had received \$42.1 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds for the SEP and was allotting a portion to public school lighting projects.



The computer lab at Pacific High School is much brighter with the energy-efficient lighting funded by the State Energy Program.

Lane wrote on the School District's application form: "I appreciate any consid-

eration you can give to our application. Our small remote district is at a financial disadvantage even compared to all the underfunded schools throughout the state, and this is a wonderful opportunity to have state-of-the-art lighting as part of our renovation plans."

When the Oregon Department of Energy awarded the school district \$65,062 that would fully pay for a lighting retrofit in early March 2010, Lane and the School Board were pleased. The Recovery Act award came at a perfect time, according to Lane.

Reese Electric of North Bend installed the new

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*-Brenda Culley
School Dist. Business Mgr.*



lights. They worked a modified swing shift, coming in after students had left for the day to avoid any disruption for students and staff.

“Reese Electric was wonderful to us,” Lane said. “They were so professional and detailed. They did a great job.”

What do the students and community think of the project?

“They love it, especially in the gym,” said Cully. “You can take pictures in there now.”

The new lights are expected to save 44,261 kilowatt hours of electricity, enough to heat 3.7 average Oregon homes per year.

Superintendent Lane is on the lookout for additional energy projects. He’d like to get a high efficiency heating system for the failing boiler at the high school in the near future.

With the Curry County economy, however, Lane also recognizes he will need another grant opportunity. He’s watching and hoping for one.



New energy-efficient lights in Pacific High School's dark wood-paneled gym made a big difference for volleyball players.

Stimulus funds make a difference to local lighting contractor

Coos County electrical contractor Randy Rema can tell you that being a small business owner in Coos County is tough these days.

“Private dollars are just not there,” said Rema, the owner of Reese Electric. “It’s been a struggle.”

The 63-year-old North Bend family-owned business went from \$7.2 million in sales in 2007 and 2008 to \$5.8 million in 2009 and \$4.2 million through nine months of 2010. Rema has had to cut his employees from a high of 63 in 2007 to 33 in 2010.

When the Oregon Department of Energy awarded American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds to several public entities in Coos and Curry Counties, the primary purpose was to stimulate the economy and put Americans back to work.

Rema is the first to say that the federal funds have made a difference. “These projects certainly helped us stay afloat. It has been a tough year and a half and these projects came along at a very slow time for us. They made a big difference in a lot of ways.”

The stimulus funds required that Davis-Bacon wages (or Bureau of Labor and Industry wages, whichever are higher) had to be paid. Rema, a union contractor, was able to hire two journeyman electricians back to work with the jobs he won. In addition, he hired two late-term apprentices back to work. They were close to completing their 8,000-hour training requirement, but just needed more hours. They are now journeymen.

“I felt really good about that,” Rema said. “They really worked hard, and were very appreciative for the work and money to feed their families.”

In addition to stimulating the economy and his business with jobs, Rema is eager to point out the energy savings that the public entities will realize from the projects this year and each year after.

“I was amazed,” he said. “The lighting projects we worked on will save 1,172,832 kilowatt hours of electricity each year.” That is enough electricity to heat 98 average Oregon homes each year.

Rema and his employees are grateful for the stimulus project work that Reese Electric bid on and won. It made a big difference to this contractor .

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. This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Energy under Award Number #DE-FOA-0000052. This report was prepared as an account of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor any agency thereof, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof.