

Stimulus funds make a difference to Coos County 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 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 County, 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



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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."



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In addition to stimulating the economy and his business with jobs, Rema is eager to point out the energy savings that the Coos County 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 in Coos County.

**Create new jobs
and
save existing ones.**

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On Feb. 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 at the urging of President Obama, who signed it into law four days later. A direct response to the economic crisis, the Recovery Act has three immediate goals:

- Create new jobs and save existing ones
- Spur economic activity and invest in long-term growth
- Foster unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency in government spending