

Stimulus work underway at CCC

Legislators toured the college's Oregon City campus, where \$1.35 million in work is underway

BY ANTHONY ROBERTS

The Clackamas Review, May 5, 2009

Local legislators got a first-hand look at state stimulus dollars at work during a visit to **Clackamas Community College's** Oregon City campus last week.

The state forked over \$1.35 million to CCC as part of the state stimulus package passed by the Legislature in February. Many of those projects at CCC were ready to go, and included upgrades and renovations to the college's electrical and communications systems. Work on the ventilation system satisfied two goals of the stimulus, to create jobs and create a more energy-efficient, green campus.

"We can not only teach students to go green, but we can show them these [projects] as an example," said State Sen. Martha Schrader, D-Oregon City. Schrader toured the campus along with House Speaker Dave Hunt, D-Gladstone, and State Rep. Brent Barton, D-Clackamas.

Bill Leach, dean of campus services, told the legislators that the stimulus money helped the college sustain 125 jobs and create 15 new jobs, all of them local. The college's board of directors declared a state of emergency so they could bypass their normal purchasing requirements and get the jobs started faster. That allowed CCC to hire contractors from the Portland metro area for every single one of the 29 projects being funded with stimulus money. That includes contractors from Milwaukie, Happy Valley and Lake Oswego.

Barton is a freshman legislator, and the stimulus package was one of his first votes. He admitted to being skeptical at first, but said that "after examining the stimulus in detail, it gained my full support."

Projects at the campus included items as minor as repainting up to a major overhaul of the phone system. Representatives from Tigard-based Cochran Technologies told CCC officials that their contract with the college helped them to avoid layoffs, and get more of their employees back to a full-time work week – they had struggled to find enough hours during the downturn. Contractors on the job during the tour personally thanked legislators for the stimulus.

Leach said many of the bids also came in lower than expected, with many contractors happy to simply have enough work to keep employees on the job until the economy picks up.

“All across Oregon, community colleges are upgrading facilities and putting Oregonians back to work. I am very pleased that right here in Clackamas County we have an exceptional college that is continuing to expand and upgrade to meet the needs of our local residents,” Hunt said. “The Legislature's jobs stimulus package touched all 36 counties, all seven universities and all 17 community colleges. That's helping Oregon move forward even in these tough economic times.”

Copyright 2009 Pamplin Media Group, 6605 S.E. Lake Road, Portland, OR 97222 • 503-226-6397