

Oregon launches web site to track federal stimulus dollars spending

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Using GIS Technology, Oregonians will be Able to Track Where and How Stimulus Dollars are Invested. SALEM, Ore. — Governor Ted Kulongoski today announced a new feature of the state's recovery Web site that provides the public with the ability to track how state and local governments are spending federal stimulus dollars provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). "I am committed to ensuring that Oregon taxpayers know how their dollars are being spent to create jobs and economic opportunities through the federal stimulus bill passed last month," Governor Ted Kulongoski said. "This tracking tool is a national model for transparency and accountability in how the stimulus dollars are spent. It will not only empower taxpayers, but eventually serve as a tool for the state in our efforts to put Oregonians back to work." Using Geographic Information Systems, commonly known as GIS, the initial version of this tool displays where the \$323 million in federal stimulus transportation dollars is being invested. Also displayed is the Legislature's \$175 million stimulus package known as Go Oregon! that funds deferred maintenance of buildings and other facilities owned by state government, universities and community colleges. The next version of this tool will have more detailed information, including the exact location of projects, dollars invested, and job numbers. The state also will use the tool to match the project location with local businesses and Oregonians who are currently claiming unemployment to achieve the highest possible impact for every stimulus dollar. "This is a work in progress. As more dollars flow into Oregon as part of the national recovery effort, we will continue to update the database so Oregonians know exactly how much Oregon has received, where it has been distributed, and the economic benefits it has delivered," the Governor continued. The Governor today also announced the creation of a state economic recovery executive team that will coordinate the infusion of stimulus funds coming to Oregon from the ARRA. The team will report directly to the Governor's Office and be in regular contact with project managers throughout state government who are on the ground investing the federal stimulus funds. Governor Kulongoski has asked Brian Shipley, one of his Deputy Chiefs of Staff, to lead the team. Other members include state employees from agencies who are familiar with the state programs funded by the ARRA. A key responsibility of the group will be to work with state agencies on tracking the stimulus funding in order to meet the federal reporting requirements. The executive team will also work with agencies to identify additional opportunities to obtain federal dollars under ARRA. As dollars are awarded and allocated, the data will be collected and incorporated into the tracking feature. The economic recovery executive team also will work with The Oregon Way Advisory Group. The Governor created this public-private partnership to identify signature projects that showcase Oregon's green expertise to the nation, thereby creating long-term job opportunities as others look to the state to tap this knowledge base. "This tool will help the economic recovery executive team and the advisory group meet federal reporting requirements and compete more effectively for grant dollars," the Governor said. "What's different is that now the state has a tool that will allow us to show federal agencies where and what impact the dollars will have in any community in Oregon."

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