



Special Report

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The Recovery Act: Creating Jobs and Making a Difference in Wyoming

Earlier this year, the Democratic Congress worked with President Obama to enact the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (the *Recovery Act*) in an effort to rescue, rebuild, and strengthen our struggling national economy. Eight years of failed fiscal policies and misguided economic priorities had left our national economy on the brink of disaster, and now – only nine months later – our economy is on the brink of recovery. The *Recovery Act* and the efforts of American businesses and workers, like those in Wyoming, made this progress possible.

Despite this encouraging news, Democrats know that many Wyomingites are still struggling, and unemployment – a lagging economic indicator – remains far too high. In response, Democrats are working to create and save millions of jobs with *Recovery Act* dollars and tax relief. Already, with more than half of the dollars yet to be spent, the recovery package has provided for more than one million jobs and the rate of job loss has slowed significantly. As we look toward the future, Democrats believe that the *Recovery Act*, combined with the American work ethic and ingenuity, will continue to make a difference for families in Wyoming and will deliver on its promise to rebuild our economy and get Wyomingites back to work.

The Recovery Act is Creating Jobs and Making a Difference

Last week, the White House announced that certain recipients of *Recovery Act* funds have reported the creation of 640,329 direct jobs. About 325,000 of these jobs are in education and over 80,000 are in construction. These numbers, however, represent only about 16 percent of expenditures through September 30 and do not reflect the majority of *Recovery Act* funding to date, which has gone directly to individuals and states, including:

- Tax relief for businesses and working families;
- Small business loans, which are exempt from reporting;
- The first-time homebuyer tax credit;
- Direct federal aid, including \$250 direct stimulus checks, enhanced unemployment benefits, increased food stamp benefits for vulnerable families; and
- State fiscal relief, which prevented job cuts at the state and local government level.

Moreover, the reported data does not capture indirect or induced jobs created when prime contractors hire suppliers or other companies to complete projects or when newly employed workers spend their pay checks. It is estimated that, if included, indirect jobs would add

another 50 percent or more to the direct jobs numbers and induced jobs would add an additional 36 percent. [Office of the Vice President, [10/30/09](#); CBPP, [10/28/09](#)]

Taken as a whole, the reported data confirms earlier estimates that the *Recovery Act* would create or save over one million jobs by now, even though less than half of the *Recovery Act* funds have been put to work. [Office of the Vice President, [10/30/09](#)]

Moreover, without the *Recovery Act*, economists believe that the economy and the unemployment rate would be much worse.

- According to Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projections, “The effect of the stimulus legislation on the level of economic activity will probably build during the second half of 2009 [and] have its maximum impact in the first half of 2010... CBO estimates that real GDP will be 1.4 percent to 3.8 percent higher in the fourth quarter of 2009 than it would have been without the stimulus, 1.1 percent to 3.4 percent higher in the fourth quarter of 2010, 0.4 percent to 1.2 percent higher in the fourth quarter of 2011, and zero to 0.3 percent higher by the fourth quarter of 2013.” [CBO, [8/09](#)]
- These estimates were bolstered by third quarter growth when, for the first time in more than a year, the economy expanded, and, at 3.5 percent, it expanded faster than expected. [*Wall Street Journal*, [10/29/09](#)]
- According to economist Mark Zandi, “The research of Moody’s Economy.com suggests that a million fewer jobs would exist today, while the unemployment rate would already have risen well into double digits.” [Testimony before the Joint Economic Committee, [10/29/09](#)]

The Recovery Act is Creating Jobs and Making a Difference in Wyoming

In Wyoming, this partial reporting indicates that 860 jobs have been created or saved by funding 284 awards worth \$476,386,519, of which \$60,027,312 has already been received. [Recovery, Accountability, and Transparency Board, accessed [11/2/09](#)]

Similar to the national number, this validates the White House’s earlier estimates that the *Recovery Act* is responsible for saving or creating 1,800 jobs so far for Wyomingites (accounting for indirect and induced jobs). [Council of Economic Advisors, [9/2009](#)] **Wyoming is on track to benefit from a total of 8,000 *Recovery Act* jobs.** [The White House, [2/2009](#)]

These numbers alone cannot adequately convey the human impact of the jobs that are supported by the *Recovery Act* – the real-life stories of local companies that can hire new employees, workers who are no longer faced with uncertainty, and families that no longer need to struggle to pay their bills. The following is a sampling of some of the local *Recovery Act* success stories in Wyoming:

***Recovery Act* funds will pay for the replacement of an aging wastewater treatment plant in Yellowstone National Park.** “Contractors have almost finished initial cleanup work at several sites around Yellowstone National Park where leaky underground fuel tanks had contaminated soil and groundwater over the past few decades. Some of the polluted sites are near pristine waters, and while they did not pose an immediate threat to drinking water, it is important that they be cleaned up, said Jim Evanoff, environmental protection specialist for the park... Federal stimulus funds will cover the replacement of an aging wastewater treatment plant

at Madison Junction, Evanoff said, adding that the facility was ‘probably the last dinosaur left in the park’ among major legacy infrastructure projects.” [*Billings Gazette*, 11/3/09]

Recovery Act funding will help strengthen programs for students with identified disabilities and at-risk youth interventions programs. “Sweetwater County School District No. 2 is about to become almost \$1 million richer, thanks to grant monies due to be delivered under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Assistant superintendent Donna Little-Kaumo told the Board of Trustees about the expected funds during its meeting Tuesday night... The district has also been provided with a list of projects deemed appropriate for one-time economic stimulus funding, according to Superintendent Craig Sorensen. Little-Kaumo said two of the grants, totaling about \$760,000, are slated to be spent under the broad parameters of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, to assist students with identified disabilities. The remaining dollars will be used for Title I programs like No Child Left Behind and at-risk youth interventions, also with the goal of assisting students whose reading, writing and mathematical skills need improvement, according to Sorensen... ‘This is an unprecedented opportunity to do some unique things,’ Little-Kaumo said. Because the grants are stimulus funds, they are required to be spent quickly. Furthermore, since they are intended to create jobs, the grants can be spent on salaries.” [*The Green River Star*, 10/14/09]

Wyoming will use Recovery Act funds to retrofit government buildings with energy efficient technology. “The State Energy Office (SEO) received another round of federal energy stimulus dollars today to help fund energy efficiency upgrades for Wyoming facilities owned by local governments, tribal entities, nonprofit organizations, and joint powers boards. The more than \$9.5 million in funds comes from the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program administered by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The funds will be used to complete facility retrofits such as: attic/ceiling improvements; the sealing of cracks and/or insulation of foundations; upgrading lighting; insulation and sealing of HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning) ductwork; replacement of boilers/furnaces; and the installation of on-demand water heaters and measures to improve the efficiency of HVAC systems including replacement. ‘This is one of a handful of programs we anticipate funding for from the Department of Energy,’ said Shannon Stanfill, SEO program manager. ‘These particular funds will help communities throughout the state decrease the amount of energy used in public and non-profit owned buildings. Typically these types of buildings have not been updated since construction so there is significant efficiency that can be realized.’” [*Wyoming Business Report*, 9/15/09]

Wyoming has awarded nearly all its Recovery Act-funded roadwork contracts. “Wyoming could be the first state in the country to have awarded contracts for all of its stimulus-funded road projects, though it won't be known for sure until the next congressional report is released. The Wyoming Department of Transportation breezed through more than \$150 million in stimulus money. WYDOT finished the bidding process for the final four stimulus-funded construction projects on Thursday. Contracts are typically finalized about a week after bids are made public while the WYDOT staff checks for uncrossed T's and undotted I's in the paperwork, according to Ken Spear, a contracts and estimates engineer for WYDOT. ‘The state has been moving hastily since the stimulus money started flowing, consistently at or near the top of states ranked by how quickly they've put projects to bid and awarded money. WYDOT has also finished the bidding process well in advance of the March 2 ‘use it or lose it’ deadline. We've been very busy letting projects. The contractors have done a terrific job of getting us good prices for work,’ Spear said. ‘We've seen a lot of competition and a lot of bids.’” [*The Billings Gazette*, 9/13/09]

Recovery Act will fund Wyoming CCS Technology Institute's training on carbon capture and technology development. “U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu today announced more than \$8.4 million in funding to develop regional sequestration technology training projects. The seven projects announced today will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technologies required for site development, operations, and monitoring of commercial carbon capture and storage projects. Today's funding, which includes \$6.9 million in Recovery Act funds, will advance the United States in its position as the leader in technology for addressing climate change and for developing near-zero emission technologies to significantly reduce CO₂ emissions from power plants...” [*Department of Energy*, 8/27/09]

Recovery Act money will be used to provide vaccines to Wyoming residents who do not have insurance coverage for immunizations. “The Wyoming Department of Health is offering free vaccines to adult residents who do not have insurance coverage for immunizations. The program is for Wyoming adults between the ages of 19 and 64 and is being paid for by federal stimulus money. Immunization section chief Jan Bloom says as people get older they may become more vulnerable to certain serious diseases that can be prevented with vaccines. Bloom encouraged eligible Wyoming residents to take advantage of the program because vaccines can be expensive.” [*Associated Press*, 8/24/09]

The University of Wyoming received seven Recovery Act-funded grants for research projects. “The University of Wyoming has received about \$2 million in federal stimulus funds allocated to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to energize competitive research projects at universities across the nation. Seven UW grants – covering research on astronomy, climate change, geology, insect cells and neuroscience – have been approved on the heels of another record-breaking year for external funding at the university... ‘We are especially pleased with the National Science Foundation's and National Institutes of Health's support of our faculty's continuing research and their efforts to enhance understanding in each of their fields of expertise,’ said Bill Gern, UW vice president for research and economic development... Three of UW's approved federal stimulus grants from the NSF – including the largest of \$586,581, awarded to Terry L. Deshler and Jennifer Mercer in the Department of Atmospheric Science – will help stimulate research on various aspects of climate change.” [*Wyoming Business Report*, 8/20/09]

The Wyoming State Energy Office received Recovery Act funds to promote energy efficiency in buildings and homes across the state. “The Wyoming State Energy Office received over \$11 million in federal stimulus funding recently to promote energy efficiency in buildings and homes around the state. Wyoming's local government agencies, nonprofits, tribal entities, and joint powers boards are eligible to apply for part of the funding to retrofit existing buildings to improve energy efficiency by a goal of 25 percent. Middle-income homeowners may apply for rebates for weatherization assistance previously available to low-income households. The funding comes from an over \$3.1 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act appropriation to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to fund state programs that prioritize energy savings, increase the use of renewable energy, and create or retain jobs. ‘These stimulus dollars will help businesses and homeowners create lasting energy efficiency improvements that will save them money on their utility bills and help make the most of our energy resources,’ said Shannon Stanfill, manager of the Wyoming State Energy Office.” [*Wyoming Business Report*, 8/18/09]

Yellowstone National Park completed its first major project funded by the Recovery Act. “Yellowstone National Park has completed its first major project funded by the federal economic stimulus program. The park says it has resurfaced the 11-mile section of road between the Lewis River Bridge and the park's South Entrance. The work cost \$1.2 million.

Yellowstone is receiving \$14.7 million in federal stimulus funding for 14 different projects. The entire National Park Service system is receiving \$750-million from the stimulus program.” [Associated Press, 7/24/09]

Recovery Act funds will be used to improve the energy efficiency of nearly 900 homes, reducing annual energy costs by an average of \$300-\$350 for recipient families. “Just over \$10 million in federal economic stimulus funding will help hundreds of low-income families keep the Wyoming chill out of their homes. The money is destined for a state program that helps people who meet certain income requirements install insulation, tune up furnaces, switch to programmable thermostats and take other steps to make homes more efficient. The stimulus funds are expected to improve the energy efficiency of at least 900 homes a year over the next three years - nearly double the current rate for the weatherization program overseen by the Wyoming Department of Family Services. Department consultant Brenda Ilg said she's asked state weatherization contractors to be ready to hire more workers.” [Associated Press, 7/22/09]

Recovery Act dollars will be used on construction equipment emissions reduction projects in Sublette County. “The air quality in Sublette County should get a boost in the coming months after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allocated funds to help reduce emissions in the area. The EPA allocation is a part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), the \$787 billion stimulus package spearheaded by President Barack Obama in February of this year.” [Pinedale Roundup, 7/9/09]

Approximately \$1.2 million road resurfacing effort in Yellowstone marked first of 14 Recovery Act projects to take place there. “Work has begun on the first of 14 projects planned in Yellowstone National Park funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Crews began work Monday on an 11-mile stretch of road between the Lewis River Bridge and the park's south entrance. The project, which is expected to cost nearly \$1.2 million, involves the removal and recycling of asphalt and repair of the road surface.” [KTVQ – CBS, 7/1/09]

Wyoming will spend Recovery Act funds to upgrade nearly 100 construction vehicles with clean diesel technology. “In a move that stands to create jobs, boost local economies, reduce diesel emissions and protect human health and the environment for people of Wyoming, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$1,340,597 to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality to install clean diesel technologies on construction equipment serving gas production areas in Sublette County, Wyo. These clean diesel projects will create jobs while protecting air quality.” [US Fed News, 6/30/09]

Cheyenne receives \$1.2 million Recovery Act disbursement for transit infrastructure enlargement. “It seems like economic stimulus money is raining down from here and there in chunks of one million, two million, 10 million dollars. For example, on June 10 transportation secretary Ray LaHood announced \$1.2 Million in Federal Recovery Act Funds for bus shelters in Cheyenne. ‘By reinvesting in our nation’s transit infrastructure, we are making our communities more livable, invigorating the local economy, and putting America back to work,’ LaHood said in a release.” [Casper Star-Tribune, 6/29/09]

Recovery Act funded food assistance for 5,267 people in Laramie County. [Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, 5/27/09]

Wyoming State Loan and Investment Board approved use of \$3.6 million in Recovery Act funds to fund two Cheyenne water projects. [Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, 5/13/09]

Cody commissioners seek *Recovery Act* funds to pay for liner to keep landfill from polluting groundwater. “The DEQ says leachate — contaminated run-off from the garbage — is reaching groundwater at the site... Without installing a liner, the Cody site would have to be shut down...To help pay for the initial \$4.5 million lined cell cost, the county has applied for \$1.74 million of state clean water funding. The funds are available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Half of the sum would be a grant and half a low-interest loan. The catch is that the lining must be under contract by the end of the year.” [*Powell Tribune*, 5/7/09]