

# State reports 515 jobs from federal stimulus

BEN NEARY - Associated Press writer | Posted: Friday, October 16, 2009 12:00 am | [\(5\) Comments](#)

CHEYENNE -- The state of Wyoming reports that state and local spending from the federal economic stimulus program has created or retained the equivalent of 515 jobs in the state since it started early this year.

Wyoming submitted lengthy reports to the federal government last weekend about the effect of the federal stimulus program in the state. State officials emphasize that the final figures on the state and local spending are still subject to change before the federal government releases them later this month.

Lynne Boomgaarden, director of the Office of State Lands and Investments, heads up the state's stimulus efforts.

Boomgaarden said Thursday the federal stimulus program has expended more than \$51 million in Wyoming through September. She said the federal program has awarded more than \$409 million to the state so far, not counting increases to Medicaid funding.

The federal government on Thursday released separate figures on the effect of \$16 billion in nationwide federal contracts funded through the stimulus programs.

The federal report states businesses in Wyoming reported receiving \$18.3 million in federal contracts, of which \$590,000 has been received so far. It states the contracts have created 61 jobs.

Gov. Dave Freudenthal said Thursday that it's clear the stimulus program has provided a boost for the state economy. Wyoming's revenues have been sagging over the last year as a result of soft energy prices and declining production.

"I do know that we have more people working than we would have otherwise," Freudenthal said.

"Anything that puts significant money into the state's economy, particularly on the construction side as some of it did, is important right now because there's not a lot of private sector construction under way," Freudenthal said.

Freudenthal said he expects Wyoming to feel more of the effect of the stimulus program in the future as pending money for energy grants and university research filters through.

Wyoming's unemployment rate hit 6.6 in August, its highest level in 20 years.

Jonathan Downing, executive vice president of the Wyoming Contractors Association, said Thursday that stimulus spending on road construction and other projects in the state has played a significant role in keeping people working in the state.

"I think what we're going to see is it's more of a job preservation, not job creation, type of figure," Downing said.

Downing said private, nonresidential construction has declined in the state along with road construction and other work associated with energy production.

"We are seeing contractors right now laying off people earlier than they had planned," Downing said. While seasonal layoffs are routine, he said that they're occurring earlier this year than usual.

"If the stimulus dollars hadn't have been there, I'd say we would be in a lot worse shape," Downing said. "We are deeply concerned about 2010."

Wyoming is competing with other states to try to land energy research and development grants funded by the stimulus program, Boomgaarden said.

State workers have made an extraordinary effort to oversee the stimulus program and meet federal reporting requirements, he said.