

No more road contracts to award; money begins to flow to contractors

## WYDOT runs through stimulus money

By PETE NICKEAS Star-Tribune staff writer | Posted: Monday, September 14, 2009 8:20 am



Efrain Flores, of Reiman Corp., shovels debris along West First Street and Ash Street on Friday evening in Casper.

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. Spear said he thought Wyoming was the first state to finish awarding stimulus money but couldn't say for sure.

As of July 31, the end of the most recent reporting period, Wyoming was the only state that awarded contracts for more than 90 percent of its stimulus-funded road projects. 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."

All of the projects are scheduled to be completed before the end of next construction season, with more than \$80 million awarded to Wyoming-based contractors. A lot of the stimulus money went to out-of-state contractors, but they often purchase materials and subcontract with local construction companies.

Though almost all of the contracts have been awarded, the state has only spent a little more than \$11 million. The rest will be paid out as work continues.