



OREGON
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NEW LED DECORATIVE STREET LAMPS REDUCE ELECTRIC USE BY 71%

SALEM— The City of Redmond, a town of 25,500 in Central Oregon, has a mixed economic profile. On one hand, the Deschutes County town is one of fastest growing communities in Oregon. On the other hand, property taxes are declining and unemployment is high. In October 2010, the unemployment rate was 15.3 percent for Deschutes County, higher than Oregon's overall unemployment rate of 10.5 percent.

It puts the City budget in a pinch serving more people with ever-shrinking funds. One thing is for certain—there are no funds available for retrofitting the City's aging and inadequate downtown decorative street lamps with more energy-efficient lamps.

That changed in January 2010. The Oregon Department of Energy awarded \$77,600 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds to Redmond to retrofit the lamps in the downtown core area of SW Sixth and Seventh Streets, Evergreen, Glacier and Highland Avenues. The funds were part of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant designated for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

The city replaced 97 150-watt high pressure sodium lamps with 50-watt LED (light-emitting diode) lamps. The LED lights, a product of BCG Technology, Inc. of Eugene, are expected to last 50,000 plus hours or approximately 11 years when running 12 hours per day, far longer than the high pressure sodium lamps last.

City workers and the local electrical contractor, Stusser Electric Co of Redmond, finished the lighting retrofit in early September. Now that the dark days of winter are here, residents can see the improvement.

"The quality of the light is much improved," said Chris Doty, City of Redmond Director of

Public Works. “The LEDs provide an ambiance that heightens the downtown experience. It’s soft and welcoming.”

In addition, the new lamps are down-shaded so they don’t illuminate the sky. This helped the City comply with the Deschutes County “Dark Sky” ordinance* to provide less urban glow.

The most impressive results, however, are in the amount of energy and cost savings. The City monitored the meters for the street lamps and found that the 97 lamps used 71 percent less kilowatt hours of electricity. Usage dropped from 6,290 kWh for September 2009 to 1,842 kWh during September 2010. At 14 cents per kilowatt hour, cost savings were \$622.72 for one month. This savings will continue while the lamp posts are in operation and will increase as electrical rates increase.

“It is a significant energy savings,” Doty said. “And, any savings we can achieve help us stretch our dollars.”

For Redmond city officials and residents, the energy project has been a bit of good news.

Michael McCormick with BCG Technology, Inc., manufacturer of the LED lights, also noted that the Recovery Act funds spent on the Redmond project helped the Eugene-based firm.

“Projects like the one in Redmond help us grow our business in the region, too.” McCormick said.

A list of all Oregon counties that received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds and amounts awarded is available at www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/Recovery/Funding.shtml#State_Energy_Program_and_Block_Grant_Awards_by_County

* Deschutes County Outdoor Lighting Ordinance calls for all private and commercial outside lighting fixtures installed after August 10, 1994 or replacement of any fixtures installed before that date to be shielded to direct light downward and limit direct line-of-sight of the fixture’s lamp to the property on which the fixture is installed. The ordinance was adopted to ensure that outdoor lighting: puts the light on the ground where it’s needed; improves visibility and safety; eliminates dark shadows and glare; keeps your light on your property (good-neighbor lighting); helps to keep rural skies sparkling with stars and planets; and minimizes energy use and operating cost.

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