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INSIDE BUSINESS

Infrastructure stimulus benefits state

In 2003, when Oregon faced one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, the Oregon Legislature provided an economic boost by investing in the state's roads and bridges. Now, for contractors across the state working on the Oregon Department of Transportation's OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program, business is good.

As part of the bridge program's charge to stimulate the state's economy, the agency has contracted with companies with expertise in everything from roadway and bridge design to demolition, construction and specialty services. These firms have bid for portions of the \$1.3 billion allotted in 2003 by the Oregon Legislature to repair or replace hundreds of aging highway bridges throughout Oregon.

One Oregon-based firm that has benefited from bridge program contracts is Quincy Engineering, whose design consultant expertise has made it a good fit for many bridge program projects.

Jeff Olson, principal at Quincy, explained that the engineers' involvement with the bridge program since 2004 has aided them in establishing a positive reputation throughout the state. The firm has leveraged its bridge program work to win additional client contracts, and the steady flow of work has been invaluable for the firm.

"We're just thrilled to be working in Oregon and to be given such great opportunities, both with the bridge work and beyond," Olson said.

ODOT is contracting with Quincy for its roadway and bridge design expertise on the Interstate 5 interchange project from north Ashland to Greensprings, a high-

**Jim Cox**

ODOT

profile job that involves replacing two bridges over the interstate.

In addition to widening the bridges and expanding the interchanges to improve the flow of traffic for Ashland residents, the firm is supporting public involvement activities for the Ashland interchange projects.

The influx of bridge program work on the Ashland bridges and six other bridge program projects enabled Sacramento-based Quincy to open an office in Salem in 2004. Currently in its fifth year of business, the Salem office has been steadily expanding and has grown to 10 full-time employees.

OBEC Consulting Engineers, a longtime Oregon firm, also is prospering through bridge program work.

Initially OBEC was hired to do preliminary topographic surveying and mapping data for six bridge projects, worth more than \$1.3 million. The firm also provided bridge and roadway design work for three design-build projects — the Wilsonville-Hayesville, McKenzie-Goshen and Weaver projects along the I-5 corridor — with a total value of more than \$4.5 million. Additionally, OBEC is working on a project near Newport on Highway 20 worth more than \$3 million.

"We are very happy to be a part of the OTIA program," said Gayle Harley, OBEC's president and chief construction engineer. "The statewide reach of infrastructure stimulus is profound."

OBEC's experience from its earlier topographic and surveying

work also helped it win a contract with ODOT on the \$150 million I-5 Willamette River Bridge project in Eugene.

Staton Cos., a subcontractor that specializes in bridge, dam and industrial structure demolition, is another Oregon-based company that has greatly benefited from bridge program contracts.

"Working on the bridge program has given us a certain amount of notoriety and visibility throughout the state that we didn't have before," said Jeanne Staton, president of Staton Cos.

Bridge program work makes up close to half of the work Staton Cos. does, and participation in bridge program projects year after year has enabled the company to develop strong business relationships with key contractors.

On a \$57 million project on I-5 between Winston and Canyonville in southwestern Oregon, Staton worked under prime contractors Hamilton Construction and David Evans and Associates. In preparation for the additional work, Staton added four people to its payroll.

Quincy, OBEC and Staton are just three of the many Oregon companies that are thriving through bridge program work. In 2007, the most current year for which we have data, Oregon firms received roughly 74 percent of all dollars spent on the bridge program. By providing opportunities on the bridge program, ODOT is laying a foundation of sustainability for Oregon-based businesses that will allow them to continue to grow and prosper even after the program is complete.

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