

Athena is a jewel of a city near the base of the Blue Mountains in northeastern Oregon. With century-old brick buildings lining the main thoroughfare, it's a little slice of Americana. Like other such towns across the country, Athena will live or die on the vitality of Main Street. When business is lagging, the community suffers. If downtown pavement and walkways fall into disrepair, it not only compromises safety, but impacts commerce and dampens the overall feeling of livability. Although Athena received downtown sidewalk upgrades over a decade ago, there wasn't enough money at that time for much needed street upgrades.

Thanks to the Oregon Jobs and Transportation Act, Athena now has upgraded water lines under Main Street, a rebuilt base and new pavement that includes concrete travel lanes, asphalt in the new bike lanes and parking strips.

"It's a lot sturdier," says Athena Mayor John Shafer. "The buildings on Main Street don't shake and rattle like they used to do."

The fresh black and white pavement will last for decades under the area's harsh winter weather and seasonal farm equipment traffic. The project also upgraded sidewalk ramps and added a rapid flash beacon to improve school crossing safety at the east end of town.

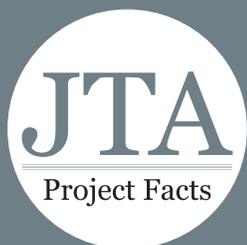
"I'm not only the mayor but the parent of two children who live here in town," Shafer says. "It's a lot safer now when they ride their bikes down to the store or to school."

Bicycle riders, motorists, pedestrians and business owners all benefit from the upgrades and clean, fresh look of downtown Athena.



John Shafer

When the two-year construction contract completed in 2013 the town celebrated as befitting its Scottish heritage: the locally renowned Weston-McEwen High School Pipe and Drum Band provided the music.



Jobs and Transportation Act Funds:
\$300,000

Project Total:
\$1.5 million

Completion: 2013