

More than **5,000 structures** and over **1 million acres** were burned during the 21 wildfires that devastated Oregon communities over Labor Day weekend in 2020.

Hardest-hit counties included Clackamas, Douglas, Jackson, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, and Marion.

The Oregon Department of Energy's **Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive Program** offered funding to support rebuilding efforts and encourage energy efficient design and equipment.

ODOE issued **852 incentives** in eight counties, totaling about **\$5.8 million** over the life of the program.

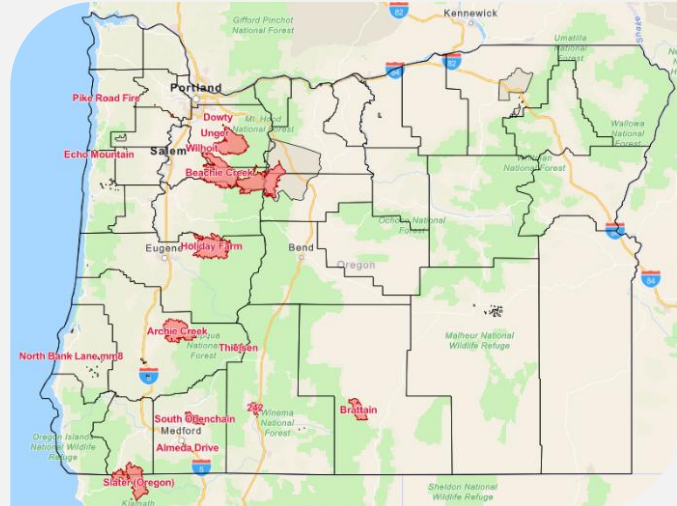


Figure 1: OR Emergency Management Wildfire Map

Created by the Oregon Legislature through HB 5006 in 2021, ODOE's program issued incentives for site-built homes, manufactured homes, multi-family buildings, and commercial structures across the Oregon counties affected by the Labor Day fires.

Program Development

In response to the 2020 Labor Day wildfires, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 2289 in 2021 to support quick and affordable reconstruction. The bill established guidelines and requirements for rebuilding lost or damaged structures. Rather than having to rebuild to current code, a lost or damaged structure that was built prior to 2008 would need to be rebuilt, at a minimum, to meet the building codes that were in effect on January 1, 2008. Structures built after 2008 were required to build to at least the version of the building code that was in effect at the date of original construction.

To incentivize rebuilding to current, more energy efficient code, the legislature also passed HB 5006, allocating \$10.8 million to ODOE to provide funding to support energy-efficient rebuilding efforts. Incentives were issued to wildfire survivors who rebuilt site-built homes, manufactured homes, multi-family buildings, and commercial structures to current building code or above code – incorporating energy efficiency improvements help make buildings more comfortable and support long-term affordability through lower energy bills.

The Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive Program was originally authorized to accept applications through May 2023, but many wildfire survivors were still recovering and trying to rebuild their homes and businesses. In response to the ongoing need, the legislature passed a bill to extend the program to June 1, 2025.

Wildfire Damage

More than 5,000 structures and over 1 million acres were burned during the 21 wildfires that devastated Oregon communities over Labor Day weekend in 2020.ⁱ

Table 1: Homes Destroyed or Damaged by County

Status	Clackamas	Douglas	Jackson	Klamath	Lane	Lincoln	Linn	Marion
Destroyed	62	138	2,348	11	463	288	54	629
Major Damage	0	0	8	0	1	0	2	4

Table 2: Other Structure Damages by County

Status	Clackamas	Douglas	Jackson	Klamath	Lane	Lincoln	Linn	Marion
Destroyed	215	<i>No data available</i>	312	54	365	51	2	91

Rebuilding Incentives

Property owners were eligible for an incentive when rebuilding a structure deemed by state or county officials as destroyed or damaged in the wildfires between August 1 and September 30, 2020. Eligible structures included: site-built residential homes, manufactured homes, commercial buildings, multifamily buildings, and public buildings.

Incentives were available to structure owners who had already rebuilt, were in the process of rebuilding, or would soon rebuild their structure. Program incentives were tied to structures and focused on rebuilding communities, so while owners could change, the incentive was to support construction costs of the property owner that was rebuilding.

Rebuilding a site-built residential structure:

- To current code: \$3,000
- To an above-code standard such as the Residential Reach Code or a new homes utility program: \$6,000

Rebuilding a site-built residential structure and qualified as a [low- or moderate-income household](#):

- To current code: \$7,500
- To an above-code standard such as the Residential Reach Code or a new homes utility program: \$15,000

Replacing a manufactured dwelling:

- Energy efficient NEEM 1.1 or better dwelling: \$12,500
- Install a qualifying heat pump system in the replacement manufactured home: up to \$5,000

Rebuilding a commercial, public, or multi-family structure:

- To current code: \$3,000 - \$4,000
- Above current code by participating in a utility program: \$8,000 - \$10,000

ⁱ <https://apps.oregon.gov/oregon-newsroom/OR/OEM/Posts/Post/five-year-commemoration-labor-day-fires>

- Rebuilding affordable housing and participating in an Oregon Housing and Community Services Program was eligible for an additional incentive of \$500/unit (max \$18,000)

Program Results

Over the life of the program, the Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive paid out 852 incentives in eight counties, totaling \$5,801,705.89.

Table 3: All Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentives Paid

Dwelling Type	Total Projects	Total in Incentives Paid
Site-Built Dwellings	592	\$3,000,000.00
Manufactured Homes	208	\$2,475,955.89
Commercial/Multifamily Structures	52	\$325,750.00
Total	852	5,801,705.89

Table 4: Site-Built Dwelling Incentives for Above-Code Standards

Above-Code Standard	Total Projects
2021 Oregon Residential Reach Code (ORRC)	58
Bonneville Power Administration's Single Family New Construction Performance Path	3
Consumer-Owned Utility Program	12
Energy Trust of Oregon's Energy Performance Score Program	144
Total	217

Table 5: Low- to Moderate-Income Incentives Paid

Housing Type	Total Projects	Paid out
Site-Built Dwellings	132	\$1,134,000

Table 6: Incentives for Accessory Dwelling Units

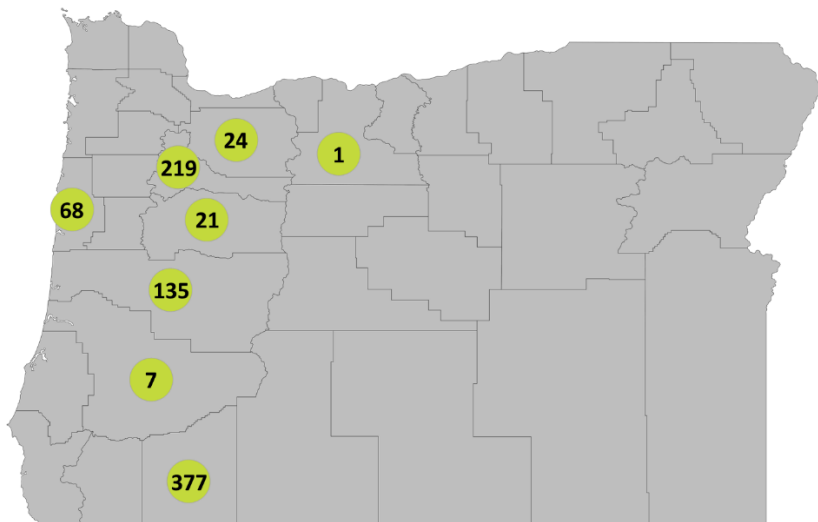
Type of Accessory Dwelling Unit	Total Projects
Building a new accessory dwelling unit	23
Rebuilding an accessory dwelling unit damaged or destroyed by wildfire between August 1 and September 30, 2020	19
Rebuilding another eligible building	8
Total	50

Oregon Department of Energy staff conducted 108 audits for buildings receiving incentives from the program. This totaled about 12.6 percent of all incentives issued.

Incentive Locations

ODOE's Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive supported rebuilt projects in eight wildfire-affected counties.

Figure 2: Incentive Projects by County



As noted above, Jackson County had the highest number of destroyed and damaged structures from the 2020 Labor Day wildfires, at 2,660. It was also the county with the highest number of rebuilding incentives issued by ODOE. Jackson County communities experienced a lot of damage, as shown in the time-based aerial photos below of a neighborhood in Phoenix, OR.

Figure 3: Effect of Wildfire on South Pacific Highway Neighborhood in Phoenix, OR (Google Earth)



Program Challenges

The 2020 wildfires were devastating to Oregon communities, and the Oregon Department of Energy was proud to offer this program to support rebuilding efforts. While successful in issuing 852 incentives across affected counties, ODOE did not spend the full budget amount by the end of the program. Several factors made it difficult for some survivors to participate.

ODOE conducted significant outreach in wildfire-affected counties, including sending mailers and partnering with local nonprofits; however, there were challenges in locating all potential applicants. Many survivors had understandably relocated, some permanently and some temporarily, so they may not have been receiving mailers. If a survivor relocated out of their original county, they may not have received or seen outreach efforts about ODOE's and other organization's programs.

Other challenges may have included difficulty filling out program applications or not being familiar with local building permits (ODOE's program required confirmation of permits, for example). For manufactured home incentives, there were different incentive levels depending on energy efficiency so some survivors may have chosen lower efficiency models. Similarly, the additional heat pump incentive for manufactured homes differed depending on efficiency, and some models did not meet the requirements for the incentive. As ODOE continued administering the program, the agency worked with survivors and community-based organizations to simplify information as much as possible.

If a similar program were to be developed in the future, ODOE would recommend that the legislature consider longer timelines to support survivors and additional outreach opportunities or funding to help reach survivors in their relocated areas. This program was one of three incentive programs (at three different agencies) established to serve wildfire survivors; allowing survivors to access all programs at once may have also improved program participation.