

Economic Pulse Quickens

Just about every other news report has something to do with the economy. Even the H1N1 Flu concerns have taken a back seat to reports by experts trying to take the pulse of the economy.

According to Ameron Intl. Corp., the water infrastructure market in the western U.S. is still weak with bid activity due to the economy, municipal budgets and lack of financing. Ameron predicts that the water pipe business will continue to experience soft market demand in the near term. Longer term, however, the company expects that the demand for new and upgraded water trans-

mission pipelines and water and wastewater systems will strengthen as the market addresses the need for water infrastructure investments.

But instead of looking to the future, what about good news right now? There is some.

According to a recent report released by a House of Representatives committee, capital works projects funded by the U.S. economic stimulus plan created or saved more than 21,000 jobs by the end of May.

Could this be a sign that the pulse of the economy has quickened? It is hard to tell.

Currently, the overall opinion in the water industry is that the market is at a standstill. However, a much-needed change could be just around the corner.

An increasing number of construction companies report that although revenue is down and employees were laid off after the first quarter, some workers are soon to be added to the payroll due to stimulus funding.

Florida, for example—which reported unemployment rates of 10.2% for May 2009—is seeing some of the stimulus money put people back to work. Tampa Bay's water department was awarded \$2.5 million, and the city is hiring two local construction companies to replace nine miles of water line through Davis Islands and downtown. The project is expected to employ 100 people, according to www.myfoxtampabay.com.

When it comes to stimulus-funded projects, some states are doing better than others. Maine, which was slated to receive \$29 million for wastewater infrastructure projects as well as \$19.5 million for drinking water projects, is the first state in the nation to commit at least 50% of its water-related stimulus funds. A large portion of these projects will be focused on separating sewer and storm water infrastructure in order to prevent raw sewage spills during heavy storms.

With much of the drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in the U.S. built after World War II, it would be hard to ignore the wave of infrastructure projects that the country is about to face. Although out of sight for the most part, water infrastructure needs cannot be ignored. Hopefully as water continues to flow, so will new jobs and the economy.

Don't Miss

PumpTec-2009, the 5th Annual Pump Theory-and-Hands-on Maintenance and Reliability Conference, to be held Sept. 14 to 15 in Atlanta. PumpTec-2009 will feature training, as well as discussions on efficiency and energy savings and exhibits from industry leaders. For more information, contact Harry Urban at 847.954.7928 or visit www.pumpconference.com.




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Water & Wastes Digest is published exclusively for the 85,000+ decision makers in the municipal and industrial water, wastewater and water pollution industries. These individuals actively design, specify, buy, operate and maintain the equipment, chemicals and services used for water treatment. Editorial content in this audited publication highlights new products and technologies concerning the supply, collection, treatment and distribution of drinking water; the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater; and hazardous waste pollution control. A product directory is included in the annual June Buyer's Guide.

COMING UP NEXT MONTH...

- Funding & Regulations
- Rural & Small Utility Systems
- Valves
- Sludge Handling
- Headworks
- WEFTEC.09 Show Preview

The August issue of *Water & Wastes Digest* will feature Meter Source, a special section, which will address current issues relevant to AMR water and flowmeter applications.

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