

RMCC Putting Stimulus Dollars to Work

In response to a grant application submitted in 2009 by RMCC, Governor Beebe awarded \$645,000 of ARRA stimulus money to the College. This award was the third highest for community colleges in the State. As designated in the grant, \$226,500 of these funds are going toward new HVAC (heating, venting, and air conditioning) units on the Mena campus in the Maddox and Spencer Buildings, and the project is now becoming reality.

According to Brenda Gillogly, VP of Administration, some of RMCC's HVAC units (heat pumps) in need of replacement were more than 20 years old. In between when RMCC was awarded the funding and when it received the go ahead bid to implement the project, some of these older units went out and the College had to replace them with emergency funds while waiting for permission to use the ARRA funds. Therefore, now as the ARRA units are being put to use, a few of the units purchased with emergency funds are actually available to be shifted to the Abernathy Building to also give that building some relief on heating and air needs. According to Gillogly, it has been a bit confusing that newer units were being replaced with brand new units, but the grant restrictions are very precise as to how, what and where the stimulus money can be used. Gillogly went on to state the good news is the campus will have new or almost new units across campus when the project is complete in the near future. This upgrade in HVAC should help with energy savings for years to come, as well as enhance the comfort level.

Other funds awarded to RMCC through the ARRA grant are going towards implementation of a business continuity plan and the construction of a greenhouse on the Mena campus.