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Federal recovery funds have helped struggling Utahns

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SALT LAKE CITY — Despite the widespread attitude in Utah that anything federal is nothing but bad, the Salt Lake Community Action Program reported that 92 jobs were created locally in the first quarter of this year directly because of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

During that same time period, the nonprofit agency that helps low-income Utahns find ways to become self-reliant spread more than \$2.5 million on temporary rent assistance that prevented eviction of more than 170 families. It also provided emergency meals to more than 17,000 people, or 12,933 emergency food orders to more than 4,598 un-duplicated households, between January and the end of March.

The resources of the recovery act are having immediate positive impact through several programs that are helping through hard times and that offer good jobs to those most affected by widespread layoffs and dwindling available jobs, said Cathy Hoskins, CAP executive director.

"These high-impact activities will keep pumping resources and hope into the economies of Salt Lake and Tooele counties through the summer and into the next two years," Hoskins said. "Actually, there was a lot of cooperation and interagency agreements in place between the state and counties, so that allowed us to put the money to work immediately."

Early childhood care for working families has been expanded, and 162 homes were weatherized the past three months, according to the agency.

It expects to nearly double the number of families in need of food assistance to over 9,000 households. The community action agency provided counseling to 133 people who struggle with joblessness and are also helping low income people address longer-term solutions to food, housing and health care needs.

Fifty of the new jobs created this year from recovery act funding were for the weatherization program. The combined savings of energy and non-energy benefits of weatherization in 2008 show returns of \$2.72 for every dollar invested, Hoskins said.

A national status report from the White House on the initial results of the act is available at www.recovery.gov/Pages/home.aspx.

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