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Stimulus Coverage

Cincinnati's Messer Construction gaining ground in Indy

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Cincinnati's **Messer Construction Co.** has picked up more than \$50 million in new stimulus-funded work in Indianapolis, where it hopes to gain market share as it renovates a federal courthouse and a bus barn for the **Indianapolis Public Transportation Corp.** (IndyGo).

"It'll be roughly 8 percent of our revenue next year," said Tim Steigerwald, a vice president in charge of Messer's Indiana office.

Steigerwald opened that office four years ago. It generates about \$50 million in annual revenue for the Bond Hill-based construction company, but Messer has yet to emerge as a major player in the Hoosier state capital.

"I'd say we're in the top 20," Steigerwald said. With the new stimulus work, "There's a potential of us getting into the top 10 next year."

Messer won a contract 18 months ago for the phased renovation of the Minton Capehart Federal Building in downtown Indianapolis. Until the stimulus bill passed in February, that project was a \$35 million renovation that had only received about \$2 million in pre-construction funding commitments.

"Most of the work was intended to be funded in the 2012 budget," Steigerwald said. "The stimulus moved the project forward and added another \$7 million to the project budget."

The **General Services Administration** received \$5.5 billion to spend nationwide on energy-efficiency upgrades and other improvements to properties owned by the federal government. More than \$733 million was reserved for federal buildings and courthouses.

Cincinnati's share of those millions was miniscule, with the John Weld Peck and Potter Stewart federal buildings downtown slated to receive a combined \$867,042.

Steigerwald said Indy's federal building will receive HVAC, lighting and electrical upgrades. The work will be done by Indianapolis subcontractors. Messer is hiring in Cincinnati and elsewhere, but Steigerwald said it's too early to predict how many jobs will flow from stimulus work.

The IndyGo contract will involve mechanical, lighting and roof work set to begin this fall. IndyGo is a transit agency that's planning to upgrade its bus maintenance facility at a cost of roughly \$10 million, about 90 percent of it paid for by a one-time stimulus grant. Messer won the IndyGo contract a few weeks ago. The bus center it will renovate is massive, with more than eight acres under its leaky roof. In addition to plugging those leaks, IndyGo is hoping to reduce maintenance and utility expenses.

"We're looking at \$400,000 in operational savings with these improvements," said Samantha Cross, director of business development for IndyGo.