



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Idaho—Rural Housing Service

Regional Collaboration

Collaborate to Educate

Outline Of Need:

While the residents of the communities of rural Canyon and Owyhee counties might sit on opposite sides of the football field during fall Friday nights, they rely on each other to provide technical, alternative and special education programs through a five-district education cooperative, [Canyon Owyhee School Service Agency \(COSSA\)](#).

For over 30 years, COSSA education and administrative functions have been scattered throughout various facilities across the five rural school districts, often in inadequate space for the specific needs, and requiring staff and students to travel significant distances between their home districts and their particular subject, resulting in significant transportation costs and risks, and reduced educational opportunities due to the time in transit rather than time in the classroom.

How Rural Development Helped:

Through USDA's Community Facility Loan and Grant Program, with funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), a \$95,000 grant allowed COSSA to update classroom equipment to meet program training needs supporting a new \$5.5 million regional technology and education center, funded through an ARRA grant from Economic Development Administration, local school bonds, and generous community donations.

Fast Facts

Program: Community Facilities Loan and Grant Program

Investment: \$95,000 Grant

Partners: Economic Development Administration, 5 school district bond & levies, R&M Steel (donation of steel)

Impact:

- Technology and Education Center serves 1,375 students annually through five-district area where largest community is 2,500 population (per census estimate)



Industrial welding is just one of the areas where COSSA students can receive industry credentials through an agreement with area community colleges

The Results:

Through agreements with area community colleges, high school students are allowed to earn transferable college credits or obtain industry specific certifications in addition to providing local industry specific and workforce development training. Along with good heating and ventilation systems in the new school, maintenance and utility costs should also be lower because it is an efficient building. Classrooms are larger and have smart boards. A larger computer lab will also benefit students.

One of the member schools, Homedale High School, is one of only two schools in the state of Idaho to be selected as a Finalist for the 2010-2011 Exemplary Schools Award. This award recognizes schools with exemplary programs that impact student learning.

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