



## **Stimulus could create 70,000 jobs in Arizona, Giffords says**

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The federal stimulus money intended for Arizona could create or save 70,000 jobs over the next two years, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords said Wednesday during her state of the district presentation.

The \$800 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will offer local help, Giffords, a Democrat, told about 200 people attending the luncheon event.

"We're talking about 8,000 jobs in southeast Arizona," she said.

That would be good news for Arizona, where the unemployment rate has been inching closer to 10 percent with each monthly jobs report announcement.

"In Arizona last year, every single day about 220 people were told they no longer had a paycheck," Giffords said.

"Last year, one out of every 198 homes in the state received a foreclosure notice," she said. "Here in Pima County that translates into almost 25 foreclosures every single day."

The federal stimulus package calls for funding to increase the nation's capacity for generating power from solar, wind, geothermal and other renewable sources, she said. Arizona's abundant sunshine should make the state a magnet for such business growth, she said.

The stimulus package, 40 percent of which comes from tax cuts, is not expected to have an immediate impact.

"The hope is that by the end of 2009 we will have hit the bottom and be on the way back up," Giffords said.

"But if 2009 is truly terrible, as opposed to just bad, we may need to do more," she said.

Results for efforts to boost education, new alternative energy businesses and other economic areas will be examined and programs refined if necessary, she said.

"We need to stand back and evaluate what is working," she said.

The economic crisis has pushed issues important to residents in Giffords' 8th Congressional District - such as border security - to the back burner, she said.

"I haven't forgotten about it," Giffords said. "It's still being discussed but it is not a top priority."

A spate of drug-related border violence, including 7,000 homicides in Mexico, is pushing the issue back to the forefront, Giffords said.

"The most contentious part of this is what we do with the 12 million to 14 million people who are here (illegally)," she said.

She said documentation of illegal entrants should be mandatory, they should be required to pay back taxes and fines, and must not jump to the front of the line ahead of people who have been waiting to acquire documentation to come to this country legally.