Exclusive: Jobs 'Saved or Created' in Congressional Districts That Don't Exist

Human Error Blamed for Crediting New Stimulus Jobs to Nonexistent Places

By JONATHAN KARL

Nov. 16, 2009

Here's a stimulus success story: In Arizona's 15th congressional district, 30jobs have been saved or created with just \$761,420 in federal stimulus spending. At least that's what the Web site set up by theObama administration to track the \$787 billion stimulus says.

There's one problem, though: There is no 15th congressional district in Arizona; the state has only eight districts.

And ABC News has found many more entries for projects like this in places that are incorrectly identified.

Late Monday, officials with the Recovery Board created to track the stimulus spending, said the mistakes in crediting nonexistent congressional districts were caused by human error.

"We report what the recipients submit to us," said Ed Pound, Communications Director for the Board.

Pound told ABC News the board receives declarations from the recipients - state governments, federal agencies and universities - of stimulus money about what program is being funded.

"Some recipients clearly don't know what congressional district they live in, so they appear to be just throwing in any number. We expected all along that recipients would make mistakes on their congressional districts, on jobs numbers, on award amounts, and so on. Human beings make mistakes," Pound said.

The issue has raised hackles on Capitol Hill.

Rep. David Obey, D-Wisc, who chairs the powerful House appropriations Committee, issued a paper statement demanding that the recovery.gov Web site be updated.

"The inaccuracies on recovery.gov that have come to light are outrageous and the Administration owes itself, the Congress, and every American a commitment to work night and day to correct the ludicrous mistakes."