

April 4, 2007

Telecommunications Maintenance, Support and Requirements Response Evaluation

Summary

Lane Council of Governments received three responses to the Telecommunications, Maintenance, Support and Requirements RFP. All three vendors have considerable technical and operational experience in the field. Lane Council of Governments recommends to the agencies that the contract be awarded to NuVision Technologies, D.B.A. Black Box Network Services. This recommendation is based on experience with the vendors, the vendor proposals, the vendor presentations, responses to follow up questions, and reference checks on NuVision.

Nexus

Nexus proposed services supported by a dispatch system with online ticket submittal and reporting. Account support will be located in Portland and technician supervision from Seattle and California. Nexus representatives specialize in support of NEC enterprise systems, and have extensive experience. Half a position of the 2.5 required was proposed to be based in Portland. When asked in the clarification process about how this would work, Nexus changed the proposal to base the third technician in Eugene. Nexus' use of project managers, with which we have experience, is a positive element, although follow through on past projects raises concerns. Nexus did not take exception to the proposed contract language. Nexus pricing is between the other two vendors.

NuVision

NuVision's customer base is in the Midwest and East. To address the distance concern, NuVision committed to open a local office, the only vendor to do so. They clarified in their presentation that a local office includes a local manager, and an account executive in addition to the required 2.5 technicians. NuVision has an extensive background in the field. The dispatch system is also modern, with electronic ticket submittal and reporting. In the presentation, NuVision described their internal backup support resources, with 24X7 2nd level support lab and staff. NuVision also provides training opportunities for customers with these resources. NuVision's use of project managers for any system sold with a CPU is a positive. Nu Vision included the most site references with dedicated technicians. NuVision did not take exception to the proposed contract language. NuVision submitted the lowest cost proposal.

Verizon

Verizon is the incumbent provider, beginning service in 1997 as GTE Customer Networks. The company originally won the Consortia business with a dedicated technician program, an approach that saved the agencies at least \$250,000 over the next five years. In 2002, Verizon won the award again based upon good pricing, adequate management systems, and performance record.

As Verizon integrated the Customer Networks group with the local exchange and cellular companies, the ability of local sales and operations staff to make decisions eroded. For example, concerns about head count during the merger with MCI led to a hiring freeze that negatively impacted the agencies; when the freeze apparently lifted, the position was not filled without a letter concerning contract compliance. This demonstrated that the company was motivated by concerns and needs outside of supporting enterprise customer premise equipment customers with dedicated technicians.

Verizon's dispatch system is no longer state of the art. The system does not allow on line access, so it is difficult to relay details about a problem or change order via the system. Yet, agency use of informal communication to convey information regarding called in tickets, complex problems and to coordinate work, is "blind" to supervisors, because it is not captured in the dispatch system. There is not enough personal involvement of Verizon management in the work to cover for the deficits in the dispatch system. No plan to replace the system or improve communication through other means was presented. Verizon does not have a practice of assigning project managers, although they are available.

Verizon did take exceptions to some contract language, and also proposed some improvements. In the clarification process, Verizon successfully addressed questions about the proposed contract modifications.

Verizon's proposal is the most expensive one overall. Verizon's equipment costs proposed are the lowest proposed. Three technicians, instead of 2.5, along with sharing expertise and time from Portland and Seattle technicians, make the proposal more cost effective than it first appears.

Evaluation and Scoring
Telecommunications Maintenance, Support and Requirements RFP 2007

Evaluation Criteria	Scoring basis	MaxPoints	Nexus	NuVision	Verizon
Judgement of Prospective Performance					
Vendor Focus	10=Enterprise customer premises equipment support focus	10	10	10	0
Vendor Resources Proposed	5=Local Manager/Office; 0=Portland	5	0	5	0
Current NW Resources	10=Eugene techs; 5=Portland	10	5	0	10
Proposed Technicians	10=3 local techs 5=2.5 local techs	10	5	5	10
Dispatch System	10=On line ticket submittal and reporting	10	10	10	0
Internal Support	5=Second level internal support 24X7	5	0	5	0
Project Management	10=Project managers assigned if CPU involved	10	10	10	0
Contract Terms	20=Accept contract terms or acceptable modifications	20	20	20	20
Cost	20=Low; 15 otherwise	20	15	20	15
Total Points		100	75	85	55

Cost Area	<i>Nexus</i>	<i>NuVision</i>	<i>Verizon</i>
Maintenance, per month	\$ 31,986	\$ 31,351	\$ 35,926
<i>Percent of high</i>	89%	87%	100%
Annual	\$ 383,832	\$ 376,212	\$ 431,112
5 year cost	\$ 1,919,160	\$ 1,881,060	\$ 2,155,560
Supplies & Equipment	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 959,242	\$ 887,809
Grand Total	\$ 2,919,160	\$ 2,840,302	\$ 3,043,369
<i>Percent of high</i>	96%	93%	100%
Supplies Sample			
390912 MA 4000	\$ 3,219	\$ 3,380	\$ 3,122
200243 digital card	\$ 2,274	\$ 2,274	\$ 2,103
200128 CCIS card	\$ 3,553	\$ 3,553	\$ 3,287
150114 8pt analog card	\$ 416	\$ 412	\$ 401
1024-03010-24 AVST	\$ 16,680	\$ 13,205	\$ 9,730
Total	\$ 26,142	\$ 22,824	\$ 18,643
Capital Sample			
Example NEC 2000	\$ 21,480	\$ 22,857	\$ 21,913
Total	\$ 47,622	\$ 45,681	\$ 40,556
<i>Percent of high</i>	100%	96%	89%
Extrapolated to \$1 M, 5 years	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 959,242	\$ 887,809