



Agenda Report

TO: CCCSWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: LOIS COURCHAIINE, PROGRAM MANAGER
DATE: MARCH 16, 2010
SUBJECT: DIVERSIONS NEWSLETTER CONTRACT

SUMMARY

At the April 25, 2009 Board of Directors' meeting there was discussion regarding the Authority's contractual agreements and the processes for awarding contracts. That discussion resulted in staff analyzing contracts to determine if re-bidding might benefit the Authority. Staff concluded that, where bidding might result in cost savings and/or improved service, the procurement process should be employed. Publishing and distribution of the quarterly *Diversions* newsletter fit those criteria. This report explains the procedures and results of the bidding process.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a three year contract with Gigantic Idea Studios beginning July 1, 2010 and ending June 30, 2013 for a total cost of \$208,419.84 (\$69,473.28 per year).

DISCUSSION

The Authority's quarterly *Diversions* newsletter, first published in 1996, is the agency's most popular method of communicating with ratepayers. Since 2002, the newsletter has been published and distributed by Gigantic Idea Studios (GIS), which specializes in environmental media and marketing.

The format and design for *Diversions* had remained relatively consistent from 1996 to 2007. In 2007, staff elected to change both the format and the appearance of the newsletter. Four-color printing was employed to catch the reader's attention, thereby potentially increasing readership. Additionally, each issue now has a central theme, providing more in-depth and cohesive information about the CCCSWA's programs and policies.

According to a recent survey, *Diversions* has a significant readership and is thus a valuable means of informing ratepayers about our programs and policies. One reason for its popularity is the "light-hearted" style in which it is written.

Selection Criteria

Value, along with cost, are important requirements in selecting and maintaining any agency vendor. In order to ensure that value was being met for *Diversions*, a Request for Proposal (RFP) process was initiated. While some agency contracts lend themselves to the RFP process, others may not. For example, contractors with

long-term broad knowledge of the Authority’s programs and policies provide extra value to the agency, whereas new contractors may need to be trained, increasing costs and decreasing value.

Because the newsletter is the cornerstone of the Authority’s public education program, ensuring that our message is consistent with our mission, and is well written, is vital. The following vendor selection criteria were established to ensure that current publishing “standards of excellence” were met or exceeded.

- Knowledge of solid waste issues
- Media experience
- Cost
- Experience working with local government
- Innovation
- Local presence

Proposal Solicitation Process

Keeping the above criteria in mind, requests for proposals (RFP) were solicited to eight communications firms. Four companies responded with proposals, which were reviewed by a three-person staff committee. Three companies were selected to make presentations to the committee. Prior to the interviews, the firms sent samples of published work, similar to *Diversions*, for comparison purposes. Additionally, companies’ references were contacted and their feedback noted on factors such as responsiveness and teamwork.

RFP Results

On January 12, the staff selection committee heard presentations from the Riezebos Holzbaur Group (RHDG), Precision Design, and Gigantic Idea Studio. Each company’s presentation and communications skills were noted. Additionally, each firm was asked similar questions relating to newsletter development timeframe, which reflects their organizational skills. Innovation was also tested by questions about suggested changes for the newsletter.

Of the three companies that were interviewed, two excelled. RHDG and Gigantic Idea Studio both presented well and scored high on most selection criteria; however, Gigantic was selected by the committee because staff strongly believes that Gigantic Idea Studios possesses the best overall skills, knowledge and experience with marketing of municipal solid waste diversion programs. Also, GIS has a successful history with our organization, thus, providing value. The potential for increased staff work (and associated costs) to bring a new newsletter vendor “up to speed” was also considered in the selection.

Company Ratings

Criteria	Gigantic Idea Studio	RHDG	Precision Design
Knowledge of Solid Waste Issues	Excellent	Good	Good
Media Experience	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Cost	\$69,473.28	\$62,415.32	\$56,952.00
Experience with Local Government Newsletter Publication	Excellent	Fair	Good
Innovation	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
Local Presence	Excellent	Fair	Fair

Cost/Benefit of the RFP Process

The contract bidding process for the *Diversions* newsletter, although labor intensive, has yielded positive results. The previous contract with GIS was an annual cost of \$78,329.52. The current cost is \$69,473.28, for a net savings of approximately \$7,400 per year and \$22,000 over the life of the contract.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority Three-year Consultant Services Agreement with Gigantic Idea Studio for *Diversions* newsletter
- B. Scope of Work and Budget