TAZEWELL COUNTY
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Tazewell County is pleased to invite you to respond to a Request for Proposal for a Telecommunications Systems Analysis.

Proposals must be received no later than 2:00 p.m. on July 31, 2013.

A. Introduction/Purpose

The Information Technology (IT) and Administration Department of Tazewell County is seeking a vendor to recommend a replacement for the current telecommunications system, serving all department agencies within Tazewell County and assist in developing a RFP for such replacement.

1. Project Background and Description

IT is responsible for the support and coordination of technology services in the county departments. Administration support also assists in the coordination of the current telecommunications system. We are seeking a contractor to provide analysis of current system, provide a comprehensive plan for telecommunications services for the county and assist in writing bid specifications for telecommunications project once a plan for implementation has been adopted.

2. Desired Goals/Objectives/Outcomes

The goal of this RFP is to find a telecommunications consultant who will provide a comprehensive analysis and a recommendation for moving forward with a system to replace the current voice mail and phone system. The analysis would involve inspection and history review of the current system, and making recommendations for replacement, including a cost analysis for each option recommended, and assist in writing bid specifications upon approval of such recommendation for Tazewell County.
It is to be understood that the telecommunications consultant would be ineligible to bid on any project moving forward as a result of or based upon their recommendations.

B. Statement of Requirements - Services Required of Successful Proposer

The successful proposer will conduct an analysis of the current telephone and voice mail system used by Tazewell County, using whatever information may be necessary as provided by the Information Technology and Administration Departments and other end users.

The end result desired from this project is a comprehensive report recommending a type of phone and voice mail system for Tazewell County. The report should provide more than one option and should include cost estimates for each recommended type of system. Once a proposed project outline is determined, the contractor will assist in writing the bid specifications for telecommunications project.

The timeline for this project is tight. It is desired that both the analysis and the resulting recommendations will be concluded at the end of 120 days from the start of the project.

C. Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change. Except as provided below, changes will only be made by written amendment to this Request for Proposals, which amendment shall be issued to all parties by the Department issuing this proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 1, 2013</strong></td>
<td>Release Request for Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 12, 2013</strong> @ 9:00 a.m. Justice Center</td>
<td>Pre-Bid Conference &amp; Walk Through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 22, 2013</strong></td>
<td>Deadline for Proposer’s Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 26, 2013</strong></td>
<td>County’s Responses to Questions Due</td>
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<td><strong>July 31, 2013</strong></td>
<td>Proposals Due</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>If needed</strong></td>
<td>Interviews Conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September Executive mtg.</strong></td>
<td>Notice of Intent to Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 30, 2013</strong></td>
<td>County Board Awards Contract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(subject to delay without notice to proposers)
D. **Pre-Bid Conference**
A conference to discuss questions related to this RFP shall be held at the Justice Center, 101 S. Capitol Street, Pekin, Illinois on July 12th, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.

E. **Questions**
Proposers will be required to submit any additional questions in writing before the close of business on July 19, 2013 in order for staff to prepare written responses to all consultants. Written answers will be shared with all potential bidders. Questions are best received and most quickly responded to when sent via e-mail directly to Sue Beeney at sbeeney@tazewell.com with the words “Telecommunications System Analysis” in the subject line. Questions will not be accepted by phone.

F. **Corrections and Addenda**
1. If a proposer discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this RFP, the proposer shall immediately notify the contact person of such error in writing and request clarification or modification of the document. Modifications will be made by addenda as indicated below to all parties in receipt of this RFP.

2. If a proposer fails to notify the contact person prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals of a known error in the RFP, or an error that reasonably should have been known, the proposer shall submit a proposal at their own risk, and if the proposer is awarded a contract they shall not be entitled to additional compensation or time by reason of the error or its subsequent correction.

3. Addenda issued by the County interpreting or changing any of the items in this RFP, including all modifications thereof, shall be incorporated in the proposal. The proposer shall submit the addenda cover sheet with the proposal (or deliver them to the Administration Department if the proposer has previously submitted a proposal to the Department). Any oral communication by the County’s designated contact person or any other County staff member concerning this RFP is not binding on the County and shall in no way modify this RFP or any obligations arising hereunder.

G. **Proposal Submittal**
1. **Form:** Proposers must submit one (1) electronic copy, one (1) signed original, and three (3) copies of the signed proposal by July 31, 2013. Proposals must be enclosed in a sealed envelope or package and clearly marked “TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM ANALYSIS”. Proposals shall be submitted to:

   Sue Beeney  
   Tazewell County  
   County Board Office  
   11 S. 4th Street, Suite 432  
   Pekin, IL 61554
2. **Due Date:** Proposals must be received no later than 2:00 p.m. on July 31, 2013. The proposal due date is subject to change. If the proposal due date is changed, all known recipients of the original RFP will be notified of the new date. If there is disagreement over the time of delivery of the proposal, the clock in the County Board Office will prevail.

3. **General Instructions:** To receive consideration, proposals shall be made in accordance with the following general instructions:

   a) The completed proposal shall be without alterations or erasures.

   b) No oral or telephonic proposals will be considered.

   c) The submission of a proposal shall be an indication that the proposer has investigated and satisfied him/herself as to the conditions to be encountered, the character, quality and scope of the work to be performed, and the requirements of the County, including all terms and conditions contained within this RFP.

4. **Proposal Format and Contents:** For ease of review and to facilitate evaluation, the proposals for this project should be organized and presented in the order requested as follows:

   a) **Section I - Organizational Information:**

      Provide specific information concerning the firm in this section, including the legal name, address and telephone number of your company and the type of entity (sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation and whether public or private). Include the name and telephone number of the person(s) in your company authorized to execute the proposed contract. If two or more firms are involved in a joint venture or association, the proposal must clearly delineate the respective areas of authority and responsibility of each party. All parties signing the Agreement with the County must be individually liable for the completion of the entire project even when the areas of responsibility under the terms of the joint venture or association are limited.

   **Key Personnel**

   Identify the key personnel and their back-ups that will be assigned to the program.

   More information about the County’s purchasing ordinance can be found on:
   [www.tazewell.com/auditor](http://www.tazewell.com/auditor)

   b) **Section II - Qualifications and Experience:**

      Provide specific information in this section concerning the firm's experience in the services specified in this RFP, preferably within the State of Illinois. Examples of completed projects, as current as possible, should be submitted, as appropriate.

      **References are required.** Please provide names, addresses, and telephone
numbers of contact persons within three (3) client agencies for whom similar services have been provided, preferably within the past year.

Debarment or Other Disqualification

Proposer must disclose any debarment or other disqualification as a vendor for any federal, state or local entities. Proposer must describe the nature of the debarment/disqualification, including where and how to find such detailed information

Firm Description

Provide a description of the firm, number of years in business, and its core competencies.

c) Section III - Project Approach and Work Schedule:

Provide a description of the methodology developed to perform all required services, with an aggressive schedule that will complete the project before January 31, 2014 if possible. This schedule should contain specific milestones and dates of completion which will be used to set schedules. Also identify the extent of County personnel involvement deemed necessary, including key decision points at each stage of the project. Information as to the type of any software that is anticipated to be used in the planning process should also be discussed.

Include your response to the Statement of Requirements as referenced in Section B., beginning on page 1.

d) Section IV - Cost of Service:

The proposal shall clearly state ALL of the costs associated with the project, broken down by category of products and services, and all on-going costs for recommended or required products and services, such as maintenance.

The project costs must be broken out and include all expenses that will be charged to the County, including but not limited to hourly rates for labor, software costs, software maintenance costs, implementation fees, shipping, insurance, communications, documentation reproduction, and all expenses, including travel, meal reimbursement, hotel per diems, taxes, etc. Failure to clearly identify all costs associated with the proposal may be cause for rejection of the Consultant’s proposal.

e) Section V – Identification of subcontractors:

Proposers shall identify all subcontractors they intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, proposers shall indicate (1) what products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and, (2) what percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.
f) **Section VI - Insurance:**

The selected proposer will be required to submit and comply with all insurance as described in the attached Sample Agreement. Securing this insurance is a condition of award for this contract.

g) **Section VII - Additional Information:**

Include any other information you believe to be pertinent but not required. h) **Section VIII – Contract Terms:**

Proposers must sign a statement acknowledging their willingness to accept the sample contract terms (Attachment A) or identify specific exceptions to the sample agreement.

**H. Selection Process**

1. All proposals received by the specified deadline will be reviewed by the County for content, including but not limited to fee, related experience and professional qualifications of the bidding consultants.

2. County employees will not participate in the selection process when those employees have a relationship with a person or business entity submitting a proposal. Any person or business entity submitting a proposal who has such a relationship with a County employee who may be involved in the selection process shall advise the County of the name of the County employee in the proposal.

3. Proposals may be evaluated using the following criteria (note that there is no value or ranking implied in the order of this list):

   a) Demonstrated ability to perform the services described;

   b) Experience, qualifications and expertise;

   c) Quality of work as verified by references;

   d) Costs relative to the scope of services;

   e) A demonstrated history of providing similar services to comparable entities;

   f) Willingness to accept the County’s contract terms; and

   g) Any other factors the evaluation committee deems relevant. (When such criteria are used for evaluation purposes, the basis for scoring will be clearly documented and will become part of the public record.);

   h) The locality of the Proposer;

4. The County Information Technology Department Head and County Administrator in consultation with the Purchasing Agent reserves the right, in their sole discretion, to take any of the following actions at any time before Board approval of an award: waive informalities or minor irregularities in any proposals received, reject any and all proposals, cancel the RFP, or modify and re-issue the RFP. Failure to furnish all
information requested or to follow the format requested herein may disqualify the proposer, in the sole discretion of the County. False, incomplete, misleading or unresponsive statements in a proposal may also be sufficient cause for a proposal’s rejection.

5. The County may, during the evaluation process, request from any proposer additional information which the County deems necessary to determine the proposer’s ability to perform the required services. If such information is requested, the proposer shall be permitted three (3) business days to submit the information requested.

6. An error in the proposal may cause the rejection of that proposal; however, the County may, in its sole discretion, retain the proposal and make certain corrections. In determining if a correction will be made, the County will consider the conformance of the proposal to the format and content required by the RFP, and any unusual complexity of the format and content required by the RFP. If the proposer’s intent is clearly established based on review of the complete proposal submittal, the County may, at its sole option, correct an error based on that established content. The County may also correct obvious clerical errors. The County may also request clarification from a proposer on any item in a proposal that County believes to be in error.

7. The County reserves the right to select the proposal which in its sole judgment best meets the needs of the County.

8. All firms responding to this RFP will be notified of their selection or non-selection after the evaluation committee has completed the selection process.

9. Generally, the firm selected by the Evaluation Committee will be recommended to the County Board for this project, but the Board is not bound to accept the recommendation or award the project to the recommended firm.

I. Finalist Interviews

After initial screening, the evaluation committee may select those firms deemed most qualified for this project for further evaluation. Interviews of these selected firms may be conducted as part of the final selection process. Interviews may or may not have their own separate scoring during the evaluation process.

J. General Information

1. Rules and Regulations

a) The issuance of this solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the County, and the County shall not pay for costs incurred in the preparation or submission of proposals. All costs and expenses associated with the preparation of this proposal shall be borne by the proposer.

b) The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or portions thereof if the County determines that it is in the best interest of the County to do so.
c) The County may waive any deviation in a proposal. The County’s waiver of a deviation shall in no way modify the RFP requirements nor excuse the successful proposer from full compliance with any resultant agreement requirements or obligations. Tazewell County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to waive any defect or irregularity in a proposal. The County further reserves the right to award the agreement to the proposer or proposers that, in the County’s judgment, best serves the needs of Tazewell County.

d) All proposers submit their proposals to the County with the understanding that the recommended selection of the review committee is final and subject only to review and final approval by the County Administrator (via delegation), the County Purchasing Agent or the Executive Committee.

e) Upon submission, all proposals shall be treated as confidential documents until the selection process is completed. Once the notice of intent to award is issued by the County, all proposals shall be deemed public record. In the event that a proposer desires to claim portions of its proposal exempt from disclosure, it is incumbent upon the proposer to clearly identify those portions with the word “Confidential” printed on the top right hand corner of each page for which such privilege is claimed, and to clearly identify the information claimed confidential by highlighting, underlining, or bracketing it, etc. Examples of confidential materials include trade secrets. Each page shall be clearly marked and readily separable from the proposal in order to facilitate public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the proposal. The County will consider a proposer’s request for exemptions from disclosure; however, the County will make its decision based upon applicable laws. An assertion by a proposer that the entire proposal, large portions of the proposal, or a significant element of the proposal, are exempt from disclosure will not be honored and the proposal may be rejected as non-responsive. Prices, makes and models or catalog numbers of the items offered, deliverables, and terms of payment shall be publicly available regardless of any designation to the contrary.

f) The County will endeavor to restrict distribution of material designated as confidential to only those individuals involved in the review and analysis of the proposals. Proposers are cautioned that materials designated as confidential may nevertheless be subject to disclosure. Proposers are advised that the County does not wish to receive confidential or proprietary information and those proposers are not to supply such information except when it is absolutely necessary.

2. Nonliability of County

The County shall not be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by the proposer or selected contractor or contractors. The County shall be held harmless and free from any and all liability, claims, or expenses whatsoever incurred by, or on behalf of, any person or organization responding to this RFP.

3. Proposal Alternatives

Proposers may not take exception or make material alterations to any requirement of the RFP. Alternatives to the RFP may be submitted as separate proposals and so noted on the
cover of the proposal. The County reserves the right to consider such alternative proposals, and to award an agreement based thereon if it is determined to be in the County’s best interest and such proposal satisfies all minimum qualifications specified in the RFP. Please indicate clearly in the proposal that the proposal offers an alternative to the RFP.

4. **Lobbying**

Any party submitting a proposal or a party representing a proposer shall not influence or attempt to influence any member of the selection committee, any member of the Executive Board, or any employee of Tazewell County, with regard to the acceptance of a proposal. Any party attempting to influence the RFP process through ex-parte contact may be subject to rejection of their proposal.

5. **Form of Agreement**

   a) No agreement with the County shall have any effect until a contract has been signed by both parties.

   b) A sample of the agreement is included as Attachment A hereto. Proposers must be willing to provide the required insurance and accept the terms of this sample agreement. With few exceptions, the terms of the County’s standard agreement will not be negotiated. *Indemnification language will not be negotiated.*

   c) Proposals submitted shall include a statement that (i) the proposer has reviewed the sample agreement and will agree to the terms contained therein if selected, or (ii) all terms and conditions are acceptable to the proposer except as noted specifically in the proposal. A proposer taking exception to the County’s sample agreement must also provide alternative language for those provisions considered objectionable to the proposer. Please note that any exceptions or changes requested to the Agreement may constitute grounds to reject the proposal.

   d) Failure to address exceptions to the sample agreement in your proposal will be construed as acceptance of all terms and conditions contained therein.

   e) Submission of additional contract exceptions after the proposal submission deadline may result in rejection of the consultant’s proposal.

6. **Duration of Proposal; Cancellation of Awards; Time of the Essence**

   a) All proposals will remain in effect and shall be legally binding for at least ninety (90) days.

   b) Unless otherwise authorized by County, the selected consultant will be required to execute an agreement with the County for the services requested within sixty (60) days of the County’s notice of intent to award. If agreement on terms and conditions acceptable to the County cannot be achieved within that timeframe, or if, after reasonable attempts to negotiate such terms and conditions, it appears that an agreement will not be possible, as determined at the sole discretion of the County, the County reserves the right to retract any notice of intent to award and proceed with awards to other consultants, or not award at all.
7. **Withdrawal and Submission of Modified Proposal**

   a) A proposer may withdraw a proposal at any time prior to the submission deadline by submitting a written notification of withdrawal signed by the proposer or his/her authorized agent. Another proposal may be submitted prior to the deadline. A proposal may not be changed after the designated deadline for submission of proposals.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Proposal Cover Sheet
ATTACHMENT A
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Certification of Authority
By signing below, the person executing the certificate on behalf of the proposer affirmatively represents that s/he has the requisite legal authority to do so on behalf of the proposer. Both the person executing this proposal on behalf of the proposer and proposer understand that the County is relying on this representation in receiving and considering this proposal. The person signing below hereby acknowledges that s/he has read the entire Request for Proposals document and has complied with all requirements listed therein.

Official Authorized to Sign for Proposal/Contractor

____________________________________________________________________

Signature

____________________________________________________________________

Title Date