



El Dorado County Information Technologies

Jacqueline K. Nilius
Director

360 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
Voice (530) 621-6686
Fax (530) 295-2512
jacqueline.nilius@edcgov.us

TO: Board of Supervisors
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 7, 2009

SUBJECT: Tape Library Procurement

1. **Background.**

An automated tape library system normally consists of a frame, robotics for handling cartridges, tape storage slots and one or more tape drives for reading or writing data. The current StorageTek tape library was acquired by the County in July 2000. At the time the technology was considered state-of-the-art and was widely installed through State and local government data centers. As a result of the installation of the library at the County it ultimately resulted in the elimination of one staff position, since the library actually performed the approximately 1,500 daily manual tape mounts and dismounts.

This type of equipment is normally given a useful life of 3 – 5 years. The current tape library is approaching nine years of use. The library and its components are at or nearing end of life and the tape drives used in the library are no longer available and can no longer be maintained by qualified vendors.

During prior year budget hearings Information Technologies (I.T.) requested funding for the replacement of the current tape library; however, funding was not appropriated due to budget considerations. The Board authorized the Purchasing Agent to issue a request for bid for replacement and bring the results back to the Board for consideration after the mid-year budget review process was completed. Two separate requests for bid were issued, the second resulting in significantly reduced bid prices. Two qualified bids were received. The low bidder was Jeskell, Inc. a Premier IBM Business Partner with a bid of \$358,016, including sales tax.

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2. **Key Decision Points.**

The tape library is used for the maintenance of all County mission critical mainframe data including but not limited to Financial Systems, Human Resources/Payroll, Property Tax administration, Recorder, Land Management, Probation and all mainframe programs, JCL and procedures and other County intellectual assets.

The tape library device is critical for backup of the County's primary administrative applications and data for off-site storage providing data security, data integrity and the ability for rapid restoration at the County data center or a mutual backup site in the event of a County datacenter disaster, including but not limited to fire damage, smoke damage, water damage, HVAC, a major power failure, loss of other infrastructure, security breach, actions by a disgruntled employee or a potential terrorist act.

Internal Data representation is proprietary to StorageTek – industry non standard. If the device has a traumatic failure there would be no way to transfer the data from one format to another. It would require a “soft landing”. There needs to be time to migrate data to a new device before system failure occurs.

The current tape library utilizes obsolete technology, including the requirement for a communications device with 15 – 20 year old technology. Components of the device are no longer available and many are only available as refurbished or rebuilt, which tends to produce lack of reliability, availability, and serviceability. This can seriously jeopardize County administrative operations and service to the taxpayers.

StorageTek was recently acquired by Sun Microsystems. The StorageTek product line is secondary to Sun's product line. The transition to Sun has produced unacceptable customer service, for example a simple correction to an existing maintenance agreement took 10 months to accomplish due to fallout from the acquisition. Sales and technical support has greatly deteriorated to the point that the business relationship is untenable. While the local service technician continues to do an excellent job for us he is only one person and seems to lack second and third level support.

According to Sun Microsystems maintenance management there are no other like devices in the Sacramento that are currently in operational status.

Business analysts have hinted of an acquisition of Sun Microsystems by IBM; however, that will have little or no impact on the current situation with our tape library; the age, condition and the fact that it is end-of-life.

The current maintenance agreement with Sun Microsystems expires June 30, 2009. Current budget recommendation for maintenance on the device is \$40,000. Future vendor maintenance availability and cost are unknown.

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3. **Recommendation.**

I.T. highly recommends Board approval to proceed with the procurement recommended by the CAO and Purchasing Agent in order to mitigate the risk of having a catastrophic failure before we have time to migrate data onto a new system.

4. Please refer any questions to me or Steve Featherston.

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