



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #010-002

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER AND DELAY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Below are questions with responses that VRE has received as of September 2, 2009 at 10:00 A.M. EST. Whenever possible, questions are presented as originally asked. Otherwise, the question is presented to capture the main thrust or idea of the question or inquiry.

1. Section M.3 Tab 6 – Office location. Is an office required in the VRE service area for this Contract?

The office is not required to be in the VRE service area. The RFP will be amended to reflect that change. See Addendum No. 1

2. Will the Contractor be responsible for extracting, transforming and loading existing data?

The Contractor will be required to work with the current provider to transfer existing data.

3. Is VRE able to describe the system environment for Windows and UNIX? Is there a database server?

The current system is not owned by VRE, so we are unable to answer this question. However, the Contractor will have its own preferred method of handling the servers they choose to use. VRE does not want to buy a software package to operate and maintain; VRE anticipates outsourcing this product and becoming an end-user.

4. What application server is VRE currently using?

VRE currently uses a proprietary system provided by SignPost Networks.

5. Is there a pre-existing database? If so, what type, ORACLE, SQL Server? If VRE does not have an existing database, is there a web service for the Contractor's use in order to retrieve the train data?

VRE's train data is compiled into an existing database and it's on a Windows environment with SQL Server 2005.

6. Will VRE require a tiered level of administration? Will the VRE Staff just have one level or many levels of access/permissions within the System Administrator Scope?

Yes.

7. Attachment P.2, Section 2.B.8 Who will be responsible for disseminating this information?

VRE staff will disseminate the information. VRE is looking for a system that has the ability to determine which subscribers have asked for which type of information. VRE staff will select which category of persons should receive the message that they are sending.

8. What is the VRE Daily Download?

The Daily Download is a page on VRE's website (www.vre.org) that includes all of the delay information from the previous day, includes reasons for delays and final length of the delay.

9. Will VRE provide specifics regarding "Notifications for passengers with disabilities"? Does this mean 508? Is the format different based on disability?

VRE sends information to passengers who have indicated that they have disabilities and would like to receive notifications of issues that may affect them, like elevator outages or trains deployed without wheelchair lifts. Similar to the answer to question No. 7, VRE staff would select a group to send specific information to.

10. Attachment P.2, Section 2.D. Will VRE provide further clarification on this functionality regarding Private Groups? What is special about these groups?

Private groups are distribution lists that are assigned to specific subscribers by VRE Staff. The general public is not able to sign up to be included in these lists. Examples of these lists include local law enforcement who ride VRE trains and receive security sensitive information and VRE train crews.

11. Attachment P.2, Section 2.F. Will VRE provide further clarification on this functionality?

Even with careful proofreading, typographical errors can be made. Some are more significant than others. Since VRE would like to have a system that will allow riders the "Option to receive messages based on a time frame, i.e., weekly, specific day of the week, specified hours or all day," some riders may not receive messages right away. With that in mind, if a significant typographical error is made, VRE would like to edit the original message such that the improved version is sent to everyone on that list. If a minor typographical error is made, VRE would like to edit the original message in such a way that only those who have not already been sent the message receive the revised version.

12. Does VRE currently have an SMS gateway?

No.

13. Attachment P.2, Section 3.A.2. Will VRE clarify the statement, "be able to be cancelled once sent"? How can the Contractor cancel a message that has already been sent? What capability is VRE looking for?

As with the answer to question No. 11, with the creation of contact windows, some messages may be ready for delivery but not sent. VRE would like to have the capability to cancel those messages that have not been sent should the situation warrant it.

14. Attachment P.2, Section 3.B. Will VRE provide a distinct list of messages expected to be disseminated from this system?

VRE currently sends two (2) distinct types of messages. One (1) is an "operational" type of message that is normally time sensitive regarding delays, cancellations, and other types of service disruptions. These types of messages are sent out as emails and text messages to cell phones and PDAs. As a result, at least 80% of the emails in that contact window must be sent out within fifteen (15) minutes, with 100% out within thirty (30) minutes. The second type is a "newsletter" message that is normally only sent as a full text email with pictures. These are not as time sensitive, but 100% of the messages must be sent out within thirty (30) minutes. VRE expects the

number of subscribers to double within the next five (5) years and expects the selected Contractor to stay within this performance standard.

15. Will VRE expect the Contractor to host the website?

See the answer to question No.3.

16. Will VRE expect the Contractor to change and/or update the current website?

VRE does not currently host the web interface with Train Talk. It is owned and maintained by the current Contractor.

17. Does VRE currently host the website on-site or off-site?

The current Contractor owns and hosts the web interface