

County of Santa Barbara

Purchasing Dept.
105 E. Anapamu St. Rm 304
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2697



RFI Title: Request for Information (RFI) for Integrated Property Tax System with Computer Aided Mass Appraisal

RFI Number: 820010

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to seek information from interested parties regarding potential solutions may be to replace the entire tax system with an integrated CAMA.

RFI Due: Monday, November 9, 2009.
Time: 2:00pm

Direct all Inquiries to

Buyer:	Phung Loman
Address:	Purchasing Division 105 E. Anapamu St. Rm 304 Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Phone:	805/568-2697
Fax:	805/568-2705
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Introduction:

1.1 The offices of the County Clerk, Recorder and Assessor and the Treasurer-Tax Collector (TTC) are seeking information to identify solutions to possibly replace the existing legacy property tax systems used in both departments. Additionally the Assessor is seeking information about possibly implementing a Computer Aided Mass Appraisal system (CAMA).

Recognizing that proposed solutions will likely incorporate functionality included in the department of Auditor/Controller this RFI also allows for submitters to provide tax distribution, assessment correction and other Auditor related solutions. However the office of Auditor/Controller is not currently seeking tax system information.

1.2 Potential solutions may be to replace the entire tax system with an integrated CAMA, or more limited solutions to replace one or more components of the system.

1.3 Vendors who wish to offer a product solution for consideration are requested to submit relevant information as outlined below in Section 4, Information Requested of this RFI.

1.4 Responses to this RFI shall become the exclusive property of the County. Information submitted in response to this RFI will become a matter of public record with the exception of those parts to each response to the RFI which are defined by a vendor as business or trade secrets and are clearly marked as "Trade Secret," "Confidential," and/or "Proprietary."

1.5 The County shall not, in any way, be liable or responsible for the disclosure of any such record or any parts thereof, if disclosure is required or permitted under the California Public Records Act or, otherwise, by law.

1.6 A blanket statement of confidentiality or the marking of each page of the RFI as confidential shall not be deemed sufficient notice of exception. The vendor must specifically identify and label as "Confidential" only those portions of the Information which are actually "Trade Secrets," "Confidential," and/or "Proprietary" in nature to provide sufficient notice of an exception or exemption from public disclosure of the submitted information. Although the County will attempt to keep confidential any trade secret information which may be used in response to this RFI, such confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and the County will not be responsible for any damages which might be incurred by the respondent or any third party as a result of submittal of trade secret information.

1.7 THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This request for information does not commit the County to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Further, the County is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. County may use information provided in this RFI to select one or more responders to participate in a future RFP or Request for Quote (RFQ). County may choose to pursue no further action beyond this RFI should information and proposed solutions provided by all responders be deemed insufficient. Responders are advised that the County will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. The County may use generic, non-confidential information obtained from this RFI to prepare a future Request for Bids or Request for Quotations.

BACKGROUND

2.1 Background - Assessor

2.1.1 By law, the Assessor must locate, identify ownership, and describe all taxable property in the County of Santa Barbara. The Assessor's Office has been organized to achieve this goal and the primary divisions within the Assessor's Office with estimates of number of employees include:

- Mapping (5)
- Title (7)
- Valuation (44)
- Exemptions (2)
- Assessment Operations (13)
- Administration (3)
- IT Support (7)

2.1.2 In total, the Department is currently responsible for 150,000 assessments, consisting of:

Type of Property – Number of Assessments:

- Residential 107,000
- Agricultural 5,300
- Commercial and Industrial 7,900
- Vacant, various, oil-gas 8,000
- Business Personal Property and Fixtures 22,000

2.1.3 In 2009, the assessed value of property on the “gross” Local Roll exceeded \$63 billion dollars. The department currently has a budgeted staff of 81 at three locations in the County.

2.1.4 The appraisal of real property is event-driven based upon lien date or specifically mandated reappraisal events. Under a state constitutional amendment passed in 1978 (Proposition 13), real property can only be reassessed when a change-of-ownership occurs or when new construction takes place. Generally, a change-of-ownership is a sale or transfer of property while new construction is any improvement to property that is not considered normal maintenance. Except in certain instances, the value of real property that is not reappraised is adjusted for inflation by no more than 2% annually. This value, factored for inflation, is called the “factored base year value” and is enrolled to the annual Assessment Roll.

2.1.5 Proposition 8, which involves lien date appraisal, requires the Assessor to annually enroll the lesser of either a real property's base year value (factored for inflation to no more than 2 % annually) or the current market value. These reductions of enrolled value may be initiated by the taxpayer or triggered by internal review of sales data. Property values that have been reduced (called a “Prop 8 Reduction”) must be reviewed annually and the Prop 8 value will be retained, returned to factored base year value or adjusted to the current market value.

2.1.6 The primary workload of the Assessor consists of the following:

- Transfers of ownership - Source are generally recorded deeds, leases.
- New Construction - Source is generally building permits and building plans issued from various agencies.
- Mapping Changes - Source is recorded subdivision maps, deeds, customer requests or internally initiated processes.
- Business Personal Property processing - Primary source is the Business Property Statement form that is mailed and returned to the office or filed electronically.
- Decline in Value (Prop 8 Reduction) and Request for Review - Initiated internally and at taxpayer request.
- Personal Property assessments – boats, aircraft, and possessory interest assessments.
- Assessment Appeals - Initiated by formal appeal application filed with the County Clerk of the Board.
- Assessment support operations - address maintenance, roll changes, specialized exemptions. Triggered from a wide variety of internal processes and documents.

2.1.7 The following figures represent Recorder and Assessor peak processing metrics for recent years:

- 170,000 Recorded Legal Documents
- 7,900 Changes in Ownership
- 8,000 Estimated Total Number of Permits Received
- 5,900 Appraisable Permits
- 1,100 Appeals
- 4,500 Requests for Assessment Review
- 22,000 Assessments Reviewed for Prop 8 Reduction in Value

2.2 Background – Auditor/Controller

- 2.2.1 Tax Extension – Levy Generation
 - Calculating tax rates and tax bills
 - Jurisdictional Changes
 - Increment – Detailed growth rates and apportionment factors
 - Ad Valorem Tax Rate Generation (calculation of bond rates)
 - Fixed Charges and Special Assessments
- 2.2.2 Tax Roll Maintenance
 - Corrected Tax Bills - Escapes
 - Refunds
- 2.2.3 Tax Apportionment
 - Allocated Collected Revenues to Taxing Agencies
 - AB 8 Factors Generation (apportionment factors)
 - Non AB8 Distributions and New Legislation
 - RDas
 - ERAF / Triple Flip / VLF Swap / Prop 1A Receivable
- 2.2.4 Tax Reporting

2.3 Background – Treasurer/Tax Collector

2.3.1 The Tax Collector bills, collects, and maintains accounting records for all secured, supplemental and unsecured property taxes levied by the taxing agencies within the County. The Tax Collector also collects and redeems prior year secured delinquent taxes, conducts public auction and sealed bid sales on tax defaulted properties. Unsecured tax billings are enforced through notice of lien, recordation and release of liens, summary judgment, seizure and sale, and bankruptcy proceedings. Properties in bankruptcy are tracked and claims are filed in court for taxes, interest, and penalties due.

The Tax Collector collects and enforces franchise tax, transient occupancy tax, racehorse tax, and various other type taxes and special assessments. The department administers Senior Citizens cable television discount, property tax assistance, and property tax postponement programs.

2.3.2 The Treasurer provides timely processing of all payments and revenue by the County, Special Districts and Schools. Property taxes, as well as other revenues, can be received as debit, check or cash payments. Payments are made in person, by mail, by phone, or EFT. 26,000 properties are paid through impound accounts.

2.3.3 The estimated number of employees by division is:

- Property Tax (6)
- Treasury (4)
- Accounting (2)
- IT Support (3)

2.3.4 There are approximately 120,000 secured tax bills totaling about \$650,000,000. There are approximately 16,500 unsecured tax bills totaling about \$33,500,000.

3.0 CURRENT DEPARTMENT SYSTEMS

3.1 Current Department Systems – Assessor

3.1.1 Assessor Property System (APS)

The Santa Barbara County Assessor Department's APS application tracks, calculates, and stores ownership, exemption, and property base value information. It also has a module that contains a workflow management system that tracks work from discovery through posting to the Assessor's roll with auditing and versioning features. APS is not a tax determination, billing, or collection system. It is the main assessment administration application that is critical for producing the yearly real property assessment roll.

The application is written in the Visual Studio Integrated Development Environment 6.0 using the Visual Basic 6.0 programming language. The application uses the multiple document interface (MDI) environment option. The application makes use of in-house developed executables and ActiveX components written in VB 6.0 and third party add-ons components and run-time references. The application must be compiled with all modules in a specific folder hierarchy structure as many forms and classes are shared between modules. There are no application-specific help files. The application uses ADO 2.1 database connectivity tools via a Data Source Name ODBC object located on all department PCs. The database is located on MS SQL Server 2000.

The main separately compiled modules and components are:

- Title Transfer
- Maps
- Value Update
- Workflow
- SharedExe (login)
- General Inquiry
- Operations
- Home Owners Exemptions

3.1.2 Unsecured Assessment

Unsecured system is used by Assessor for managing Unsecured Properties. This system comprises of Unsecured website, Autopilot (planes) website, Business Property Statement (BPS) webservice and Welfare webservice and windows interfaces (jobs) that exchange data with legacy mainframe Unsecured Billing System used by Treasurer.

Websites and webservices are coded in ASP.NET using C# as programming language.

Windows interfaces are coded in Microsoft.NET Windows Forms platform using C# as programming language.

Database used for all the systems is SQL Server 2005.

Authentication for users is managed Active Directory and Authorization is handled by tables in Unsecured MS SQL Server 2005 database.

For reporting Active Reports is used.

Interfaces with TTC mainframe to transfer unsecured assessment values for billing

3.1.3 Comparable Sales

The Comparable Sales system provides a central repository for county sales and property characteristics information on residential properties. The program assists in the valuation process for residential properties and can automatically produce sales comparison adjustment sheets (in Excel) for appraisers. Some of the valuation processes where the program is helpful are:

- Transfers
- Appeals
- Prop 8 Reviews
- Trending
- Forecasting

The CompSales database receives regular automatic updates of residential properties that have transferred from the APS system. Parcels can also be added for property characteristic purposes only.

The application is written in the Visual Studio Integrated Development Environment 6.0 using the Visual Basic 6.0 programming language. The application uses the multiple document interface (MDI) environment option. The application makes use of third party executables and ActiveX components and run-time references. The application is one compiled executable that does not share forms or classes with other modules. There are no application-specific help files. The application uses ADO 2.1 database connectivity tools using Windows Authentication to connect to the database. The database is located on MS SQL Server 2000.

3.1.4 Ag Preserve

Ag Preserve system is used by Assessor for managing Agricultural properties (Williamson Act). These properties (approx. 2,200 parcels with 1,000 contracts) have calculations that are complex in nature. In a much summarized perspective it can be viewed as the parcel being broken up into many smaller ones with each having separate bases and owners that have to be tracked separately and independently then valued/reported as one.

The application is written in VB.Net and is distributed to the client. The interfaces to the Assessors main valuation application (APS) are done through ODBC connections, data elements that are passed were determined to be maintained in one of the application and not both – such as names, owners, addresses, parcel numbers, events, etc. What are passed to the main valuation application (APS) are the values of the parcel, how these values were calculated is in the Ag Preserve application.

Windows interfaces are coded in Microsoft.NET Windows Forms platform using VB.Net as programming language.

Database used for all the systems is SQL Server 2005.

Authentication for users is managed Active Directory and Authorization is handled by tables in MS SQL Server 2005 database.

For reporting Active Reports is used and are presented in Property.Assessor, there are no reports in the Ag Preserve application.

Note: Ag is different than the other applications in that it is in VB.Net not web based, required to be loaded to a PC.

3.1.5 Property.Assessor

Property.Assessor system is used by Assessor for providing lookup for secured properties. These lookups currently include values, ownership, remarks, characteristics, jurisdictions, events, etc. Additionally it interfaces with Bing Maps (formally LiveMaps), using services to retrieve lat/long. Also integrates with Laserfiche document management system and Recorders (DFM – RIIMS) system for images, documents, photos, maps, etc. It is being designed and built to replace all the functionality of the VB 6 front-end of APS. The redesign involves review and reengineering of business processes.

Property.Assessor is coded in ASP.NET using C# as programming language (N-hibernate)

Database used for all the systems is SQL Server 2005.

Authentication mode is Forms and user is authenticated against their Active Directory account.

For reporting - Active Reports is used.

3.1.6 Miscellaneous

All the Assessor applications have a mirrored separate test environment.

APS interfaces directly with the Auditor Controller and TTC systems. The Unsecured system interfaces with TTC mainframe to transfer assessment values for billing. All other applications interface with APS within the Assessor Department.

Other applications used by Assessor include Apex building sketching, AutoCad and ArcGIS.

3.2 Current Systems – Auditor/Controller

The majority of the systems/tools used by the Auditor's office are written in Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel to do extensive analysis and/or calculations to generate files or results necessary for the mainframe billing and collection system. A 'Property Tax Data Warehouse' was established with daily downloads from the mainframe system into SQL tables, thus allowing numerous applications to draw from this data source.

3.2.1 PTAX

PTAX is a Microsoft Access application used to apportion and distribute property taxes to the jurisdictions based on the apportionment rates that are established annually.

3.2.2 Roll Correction

Roll Correction is a Microsoft Access application is used to calculate refunds, escapes, or cancellations of bills as a result of assessment roll corrections and sends the results to our accounts payable system and mainframe. The application generates and tracks claim letters, manages approval authorization levels, and has reporting functionality.

3.2.3 Fixed Charge application

Fixed Charge systems is a Microsoft Access application that is used to import standard data files from various taxing agencies annually. These files contain charges for parcel that will be put on the property tax bill and is mainly used during the annual property tax bill generation process. Purpose of the application is to consolidate the data, check data integrity, and prepare the data for upload to the mainframe billing and collection system.

3.2.4 Bond Rate analysis

Bond Rate analysis uses fairly complex Microsoft Excel spreadsheets that are used to analyze and determine the annual General Obligation bond rates. It provided long term forecasting and scenarios of bond rates. Major data elements used in these calculations are individual agencies assessed values and projected assessed value (20-30 years), individual bond amortization schedules that usually has a number of issue series. Once rates have been established they are then entered into the mainframe billing and collection system for the annual bill generation.

3.3 Current Systems – Treasurer/Tax Collector

3.3.1 The Tax Collector desires to consolidate as many of their existing systems as possible into one integrated system.

3.3.2 The secured, unsecured and supplemental programs are written in COBOL and the applications run on an IBM computer called a zFrame. The computing device is a Pentium 3 class server using LINUX as the base operating system software. Running on top of LINUX is FLEX-ES, a special application that emulates the IBM mainframe operating system environment.

3.3.3 The secured and unsecured applications are over 30 years old. The supplemental application is almost 25 years old.

3.3.4 Access databases are used for bankruptcy tracking, correspondence to taxpayers, transient occupancy tax, mobile home tax clearance certificates, liens and judgments on unsecured delinquencies, power to sell letters tracking, payment plan reminder letters, racehorse tax, cable TV discounts, and printing payment stubs for redemption payment plans.

3.3.5 The ItemAge application handles processing of all Treasury cashiering transactions, including departmental deposits, collection payments, and property tax receipts. Transactions are taken at the counter using NCR 7731 devices, and in the TTC back office using NCR 7780 repetitive processing (RPS) equipment. The NCR 7780 RPS equipment was purchased in December 1992. The counter-based 7781 devices were purchased afterward. The application runs on a single Windows 2003 application server.

4.0 Instructions for preparing and submitting information

4.1 Schedule of Events

- October 7, 2009 – RFI Release
- October 23, 2009 – Last day to submit questions
- October 30, 2009 – Distribute all questions and answers
- November 9, 2009 at 2pm – RFI Due

4.2 Inquiry Contact Information

Questions regarding this Invitation should be directed in writing, preferably by email, to the Buyer specified on the title page, by the Deadline for Submission of Questions as stated in Section 4.1, Schedule of Events. Answers, citing the question asked but not identifying the questioner, will be distributed simultaneously to all known prospective Vendors.

4.3 Submittal Requirements

- Number of paper copies requested: Three (3)
- Number of electronic copies requested: One (1)

Where submittal is to be mailed:

To enhance your odds for positive delivery and proper handling of your Reply, we ask that you duplicate the following label and affix it to the outside of your submittal envelope.

820010 - Due on November 9, 2009 2pm
Phung Loman
County Purchasing Division
105 E. Anapamu St., Room 304
Santa Barbara CA 93101-2070

Submittal Deadline - We must receive your Reply as directed no later than the date and time shown on the title page. Any Reply received after that deadline *will not* be considered *unless* you obtain the express consent of all other competing and timely replying Bidders. Absent that unlikely scenario, you will find us merciless in this. Traffic, parking, courier service or other problems (including erroneous delivery to any other County office) are not excusable. We recommend you set for yourself an earlier deadline.

Requests for extensions of the closing time will not be granted. Late submittals will not be accepted. Submitters should allow sufficient mailing time to insure the timely receipt of their response.

4.4 Format and Content

Submitters shall submit information that is concise and which specifically responds to the questions and technical requirements posed in this RFI. In their response, Submitters may reference appendices or attachments that elaborate (but do not replace) specific responses to the RFI items. Any appendices or attachments provided with this submittal shall be clearly identified and labeled.

Submittals shall include the following in the specified order:

- a) Letter of Transmittal- A cover letter transmitting the information the Jurisdiction, signed by an official authorized to contract for the firm. The letter must contain the following at a minimum: Name, title, address, telephone number, and email address of the company's contact person.
- b) Executive Summary - A detailed description of the specific services to be provided, including whether Santa Barbara County employees are needed to participate, and if so, the extent to which their participation is needed, and the timing and length of this process.
- c) Submitter Qualifications (See Section 5 below)
- d) Product / Service Proposed Solutions (See Section 6 below)
- e) Technical Requirements (See Section 7 below)
- f) Implementation Process & Resources (See Section 8 below)
- g) Support Procedures and Capabilities (See Section 9 below)
- h) Cost / Pricing - Provide first year costs and maintenance and support costs for first four years. Be sure to include all costs, including customization, interface, data conversion, project management, staff training and licensing fees. Information on price variances between system components should also be indicated.

5.0 Submitter Background and Qualifications

5.1 Company Profile

- a. Type of ownership
- b. Parent company and/or subsidiaries
- c. Year established (include former names and associated dates if applicable)
- d. Physical location of parent company
- e. Physical location of office that would support the implementation. (The vendor must have central office capability to supervise, monitor, and ensure satisfactory provision of service.)
- f. Contact Information for office that will support this project
- g. Website address
- h. Additional product lines offered
- i. Total number of clients using the proposed solution
- j. Brief history of the company
- k. Company's mission
- l. Years of experience providing proposed solution – minimum of five (5) years required

5.2 Current Staffing

Submitters shall provide an organizational chart indicating the number of full-time, part-time, and contract employees dedicated to this product line.

Please describe employee growth rate over the past 5 years.

- Number of employees in Current Year: _____
- Number of employees in Previous Year: _____
- Number of employees in Second Previous Year: _____
- Number of employees in Third Previous Year: _____
- Number of employees in Fourth Previous Year: _____

Additionally, please describe the continuing education received by your staff.

5.3 Source Code

Describe your approach to source code delivery, ownership and escrow. Also describe any restrictions that may be placed on access by the County to the source code. Will Santa Barbara County have access to the Data Model (for report writing)?

5.4 References and Extended Client List

Submitter shall provide a list of five primary references including: jurisdiction name/title, contact name/title, contact phone number, contact mailing address, contact email address, number of years as a client, parcel count, and implementation date.

The Submitter must also prepare and submit an all-inclusive (extended) list of current clients that have purchased the proposed solution. This extended client list should, at minimum, include the following information: jurisdiction name/title, contact name/title, contact phone number, contact mailing address, contact email address, number of years as a client, parcel count, and implementation date.

Provide a list of contracts you have engaged within the last three (3) years.

For vendors submitting information on a CAMA solution: provide a list of jurisdictions that have purchased a full CAMA solution that is fully functional, in use and producing values for the jurisdiction. Include jurisdiction name/title, contact name/title, contact phone number, contact mailing address, contact email address, number of years as a client, parcel count, and implementation date.

5.4 User Groups

The Submitter should provide information regarding all (technical and end-user/business) user groups and conferences that exist for the proposed software solution. The Submitter response should, at minimum, include the following:

- Date formed
- Number of members
- Purpose of the group
- User group charter/bylaws
- Frequency of meetings
- Group President name and contact information
- Membership fee information
- Availability of web-based user group bulletin board or portal
- Level of vendor involvement

6.0 Product / Service Proposed Solution

Provide a description of the product solution for Santa Barbara County. The County is looking for specifics on either system wide or department component solutions to replace and improve the legacy systems described in Section 3 above.

Proposed solution should demonstrate that it provides functionality that is compliant with property tax laws unique to California.

Information must be sufficiently detailed to allow adequate evaluation of the product.

7.0 Technical Requirements

Describe the architecture of the product to be delivered. Include information on product support for the following:

- a. Server and client platforms, network operating systems, and databases.
- b. If the product is based on a client/server architecture, include the amount of data that will be transmitted over the network between the server and client workstations for an installation that is sized to fit Santa Barbara County.
- c. Describe your remote access solution, detailing all equipment that your system will provide and what equipment you are assuming that either the remote user or central site has. Provide information on any required remote access hardware not included with your remote access solution.
- d. Number of implementations of this proposed product solution.

8.0 Implementation Process & Resources

Submitter should provide a general overview of how their company would propose implementing their solution in Santa Barbara County. This overview should address gap analysis, data conversion, project management, training and any required system interface issues. Provide an estimate of time to completion based on past experience.

Describe required resources, in terms of manpower and server load. How many personnel will be provided by the company? How much time will be required of Santa Barbara County staff to implement the product?

9.0 Support Procedures and Capabilities

- Describe procedures for on-going support of the product.
- Describe how company support personnel and facilities will be assigned.
- How many County personnel will be required for on-going support?
- How are new releases handled?