



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Utility Billing Software - Request for Information and Pricing

MEETING DATE: February 19, 1997

SUBMITTED BY: Finance Director

RECOMMENDED ACTION: City Council authorize the Utility Billing Software Team to evaluate, select, and bring back a recommendation to purchase a Utility Billing Software product.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: As a result of Electric Industry Deregulation, the Utility Billing Software must be replaced with a sophisticated system sufficiently flexible and rapidly adaptable to both present and future customized rate structures, billing calculations, and reporting requirements.

The existing Utility Billing System is over 20 years old and has had no major restructuring or improved design since installation in the mid 70's. Improved functions have been added to this software throughout the years, but the basic design of data files and programs remains very outdated. In it's current form, this software is extremely difficult to modify, particularly to the extent required to process complex rate structures and calculations of the type demanded by Electric Deregulation.

The Council has approved contracts and rate structures as a part of the necessary process of working effectively with the customer. It is recognized these are mandatory actions and that other such contracts and/or restructuring will be necessary. These kinds of actions, which are essential to the well being of the City of Lodi, will place a heavy demand on the most sophisticated of Software; outdated software will not stand up under this kind of pressure.

Our existing Utility Billing Software has served the City very well for many years. It is a system designed for a time when requirements were not so complicated. To rewrite this system with existing staff would be an undertaking of enormous magnitude, involving several years dedicated to this task exclusively. When compared to the expected cost in the range of \$200,000 to \$250,000 for Utility Billing Software, the option to purchase emerges as the practical alternative.

The Utility Billing Software Team consists of: Layton Bull, Maxine Cadwallader, Jim Doyle, Vicky McAthie, Tyson Mordhorst, Jack Stone, and Roy Todd (team activity has been coordinated with the Water and Sewer Utilities). It is the goal of this team to evaluate and select a Utility Billing Software product, and bring a recommendation to purchase this package to the Council on March 19, 1997.

FUNDING: Capital Improvement Budget, Electric Utility, Water Utility, Sewer Utility

Handwritten signature of Vicky McAthie in cursive.

Vicky McAthie
Finance Director

Prepared by Roy Todd, Data Processing Manager
Attachments

APPROVED: _____

Handwritten signature of H. Dixon Flynn in cursive.
H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager

CITY COUNCIL

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CITY OF LODI

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H. DIXON FLYNN
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City Clerk
RANDALL A. HAYS
City Attorney

(date)

(Vendor Name)
(Address)
(City State Zip)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION & PRICING

The City of Lodi is requesting information from vendors who offer a feature rich Utility Billing software product which is designed to handle a full range of utility services, including electric, water, sewer, refuse, telecommunications, and gas. While it is extremely desirable that this product be integrated with a full suite of financial software for city governments, this is not considered mandatory at this time. This information will be used to develop a Capital Project plan and request for funding, please do not underestimate your pricing. At this time, vendors will not be excluded based on the total dollar value of their bid or the availability of other software products.

Please provide detailed pricing for Utility Billing software and less specific pricing for additional applications. Utility Billing is our initial software upgrade with subsequent applications to follow as quickly as possible. Pricing should be provided by module. Identify separately any module in development or implemented solely at beta sites. For each module also include a price for future software upgrades and five years of annual maintenance, by year. Training, consulting, project management /preimplementation planning / fit analysis, etc. should be priced separately detailing rates.

Attachments are provided to assist in the effort to acquire information. Our goal is to use this information in moving quickly to a software decision. While these attachments will be helpful in this process, we do not intend to rely solely on these forms. We will be in contact with vendors as well as talking with other customers and otherwise evaluating Utility Billing software.

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General City Information:

Population 55,000

Number of City Employees:

Regular 400

Finance 35

MIS 5

Current Technical Environment:

Computing Platforms:

Current Application Processor System:

Make / Model IBM AS/400 Model E45

RAM 80MB

Disk 9.5GB

Personal Computers:

There are currently approximately 100 PC's in use within the organization. The majority are IBM Clones, with some IBM & HP. The City's primary PC operating environment is Windows 3.1. The City's standard PC desktop software is Microsoft Office.

Estimated Concurrent User Base:

With the current number of employees and level of services offered, a new Utility Billing system would be used by an estimated 40 concurrent users.

Networking & Infrastructure:

The City of Lodi has in place a partial infrastructure to support networking of its computing platforms. Networks are not currently connected. Limited fiber optic cabling provides some connection along with telephone leased lines.

There are 5 independent PC LAN's. The primary network software is Novell Netware version 3.x.

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Milestones:

Response to RFI due no later than March 06, 1997.

Target Dates:

Mail RFI	February 06, 1997
Requested RFI Response	February 19, 1997
Council Approval	March 19, 1997
UB Software Purchase	March 20, 1997
Conversion	To be planned with Vendor
Begin Training	To be planned with Vendor
Implementation	To be planned with Vendor
"Go Live"	January 1, 1998

Thank you for your participation in this effort. If you have any questions concerning this RFI, please contact Roy Todd at (209) 333-6847.

Additional contacts:

Layton Bull at (209) 333-6761 ext. 688 -or-
Tyson Mordhorst at (209) 333-6761 ext. 654.

Responses may be faxed to (209) 333-6795.

Sincerely,

Attachments:

- Financial System Requirements
- Utility Billing Volume Indicators
- Utility Billing Features and Functions
- RFI: Vendor Questions

City of Lodi

**Request for Information
Requirements**

Financial System Requirements:

Required Application:

Utility Billing

Desirable Integrated Applications:

General Ledger (Fund Accounting, including CAFR)

Budget Preparation / Cost Allocation

Project Accounting

Payroll & Human Resources

Applicant Tracking

Accounts Payable

Purchasing/Inventory

Central Cashiering

Accounts Receivable

Business License

Fixed Assets

Building Permits

Work Orders/Facility Management

Optional Applications:

Fleet Management

Parks & Recreation

Code Enforcement

Required Utility Billing Features: (checklist included with RFI)

Modular, flexible design allowing rapid modification

Graphical user interface

Flexible history maintenance and retention

Capability to schedule batch processes (Billing, etc.)

Location based Service Address independent of Customer Master

Desired Utility Billing Features:

Full Integration

“Drill Down” to source data with graphical presentation

Fully developed use of customer credit history

Interactive Voice response capability for customers

City of Lodi
Request for Information
Volume Indicators

Utility Billing Volume Indicators:

Approximate Per Month

Electric:

Customer accounts	<u>26,000</u>
Residential customers	<u>18,000</u>
Commercial customers	<u>3,000</u>
Industrial customers	<u>50</u>
Meters installed	<u>22,000</u>
Meters in inventory	<u>23,000</u>
Bills per billing cycle	<u>1,300</u>
Billing cycles	<u>19</u>

Water:

Customer accounts	<u>26,000</u>
Residential customers	<u>23,500</u>
Commercial customers	<u>875</u>
Industrial customers	<u>50</u>
Water Meters installed	<u>925</u>
Meters in inventory	<u>1,000</u>
Bills per billing cycle	<u>1,300</u>
Billing cycles	<u>19</u>

Sewer:

Customer accounts	<u>26,000</u>
Residential customers	<u>23,500</u>
Commercial customers	<u>875</u>
Industrial customers	<u>50</u>
Bills per billing cycle	<u>1,300</u>
Billing cycles	<u>19</u>

Refuse:

Customer accounts	<u>26,000</u>
Residential customers	<u>19,000</u>
Commercial Customers	<u>1,200</u>
Industrial Customers	<u>50</u>
Bills per Billing Cycle	<u>1,050</u>
Billing cycles	<u>19</u>

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Please complete the Utility Billing features and functions list. Use the “Comments” area to explain any exceptions or additional features of the category. If you need additional space, attach pages as needed for your comments. Please include the line number in your response and mark the “Additional Comments Attached” column.

Definitions:	
Service	Any 1 service (Electric, gas, water, sewer, refuse, telecommunications)
Service Components	Each service may have multiple components with each one provided by a different supplier (Electric: generation, transmission, distribution, ...)
Service Location	A master item that ties to Land/Parcel/GIS Dictionary
Customer	A single person or entity (corporation, partnership) financially responsible for bill
Account	1 or more Customers, 1 mailing address, 1 Service Location, 1 or more Services
Summary Account	Group & summarize for Customer multiple Accounts
Agency	Organization or Entity for which bill is being prepared
Aggregate	Group of customers collectively using a 1 or more Service Component
Contract	Exclusive rate schedule designed for the customer's requirements

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↴
101	AS/400:				
102	Support CISC & RISC processors				
103	Path from CISC to RISC				
104	Do you support OS/400 V2R3				
105	Any OS/400 V3 dependencies?				
110	Security:				
111	By user, department, level of responsibility				
112	Integrated user-defined custom menus				
113	Are menus generated from SDA?				
120	Executive Information System (EIS):				
121	Sophisticated functions including summary, detail, grouping, "drill-down", math & string functions, sequencing, interactive & programmable selection criteria, etc.				
122	Multiple output formats including screen, line & page print, export to file, export to popular PC-Windows applications (MS Office)				
123	Interactive & batch execution				
124	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Reporting				
201	Unique Number for independent tracking:				
202	Agency Number (Multi-Agency capability)?				
203	Customer Number?				
204	Service Location Number?				
205	Meter Number?				
206	Account Number?				
207	Summary Account Number?				

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↴
208	Aggregation (Group of Accounts or Customers) Number?				
209	Service Component Number?				
210	Service Component Vendor Number?				
211	Maintain Customer Number for other utility suppliers (Customer gets service from City of Lodi & PG&E)				
220	Customer Information:				
221	Account, Customer, Property Owner, Landlord/Property Manager independent profiles				
222	Customer: Name, Mailing Address, Social Security Number, Driver Classifications				
223	Deposit information (amount, date, status) by Customer per Account				
224	Customer's Bank information (Bank Number, Account Number, etc.) needed for automatic bank drafting				
225	Owner/Landlord/Property Manager Service Profile by Service Location: Owner/Landlord/Property Manager versus tenant				
226	Do you have a separate corporate name field?				
227	Group and reference Customers by user-defined criteria				
228	Customers in unlimited number of Groups				
240	Service Location Information:				
241	Service Location Information (Land/parcel/GIS): Street/Address dictionary, Parcel No., free form notes				
242	Structure Information (House, Apts, Duplex, School, Commercial/Retail, Manufacturer, etc.)				
243	Multiple user-defined special districts coding (i.e. Revitalization District)				
244	Utility Zone coding, Land Zone, Land Use, Subdivision				
260	Account Information:				
261	Account and Summary Account Status - Active, Inactive, Final, Collections				

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↓
262	Account and Summary Account Billing and Payment Status - Billed, Paid, Paid partial, Delinquent				
263	Link and reference other information by Account: All Customers by this Service Location, All Accounts with this Customer				
264	Group and reference Accounts by user-defined criteria				
265	Accounts in unlimited number of Groups				
309	Rate Structuring/Description				
301	Rate Structuring:				
302	Complex and sophisticated date-sensitive rate structuring using multiple Service Components, including tiered pricing with minimum charge.				
303	Service Components billed to different Customers				
304	Service Component supplier (Customers may choose to purchase Service Components or combination of Service Components from different suppliers)				
305	Aggregation of Accounts				
306	Real Time Pricing - the hourly price would vary with the price of the Power Exchange or some other standard				
307	Aggregate Service Locations for same Customer or unlimited Accounts, while maintaining individual and aggregate history				
308	Customer discounts applied to an individual Account or group of Accounts (i.e. Medical, Low Income, Senior Discount)				
309	Customer discounts based on Service Location (i.e. Revitalization District)				
310	Surcharges applied to Customer or groups of Customers based upon date and/or Service Location				
311	Temporary Service Component Override controlled by start/stop dates applied to Customer, group of Customers and/or Service Location Districts				
312	Custom contract rate for an unlimited amount of Accounts, unlimited rate schedules				
313	Unlimited number of billing calculations				

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↴
314	Flat charges per Account and/or per quantity				
315	Tiered rates for set multiple billing quantity for cycle (i.e. kw, kwh)				
316	Tiered rates for set multiple billing quantity for number of days in cycle				
317	Tiered rates based on time of use				
318	Tiered rates using declining multiple billing quantity				
319	Tiered rates using inverted multiple billing quantity				
320	Rebates or credits by flat rate or usage				
321	All rates date sensitive, Error when dates conflict				
322	User controlled application of discounts? Prioritize? Cumulative?				
323	Duplicate competitors rates and show as comparison to Customer				
400	Readings, Billing & Administration Bills				
401	Readings:				
402	Cycle billing (daily) on a monthly basis - modify cycle/routes provision				
403	Notice for Customer read (Dial cards)				
404	Interface with existing Itron hand held meter reading system				
405	Collect and translate pulse data from recorders over phone lines and convert into billing determinants by time of use periods				
406	Reading source (Itron, Estimate, Call-In), type (Normal, Re-read)				
407	History of all readings, note which reading used in Billing				
408	Multiple meters for Electric - including demand & time-of-day meters per Account				
409	Multiple meters for Water per Account				
410	Multiple meters for Gas per Account				
411	Multiple time sensitive connections for Telecommunications per Account				
412	Usage calculation includes meter changes				
413	Date-sensitive processing of multiple meter readings in a cycle				
414	Process multiple time-of-day readings (at least four)				

City of Lodi
 Utility Billing Features & Functions
 Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↴
440	Contract Billing: Contract charges compared to non-contract charges				
450	Adjustments:				
451	Manual adjustment of all billing components and amounts				
452	User defined adjustments (start/stop date)				
453	Compute & prorate opening and closing bills on demand				
454	User defined delinquency terms based on customer or group				
455	Adjustment Register per Adjustment period				
456	Date-sensitive and variable Adjustment Register				
460	Bills:				
461	Bar coding: Agency, Account, Amount				
462	Bills: Report prior year same period usage				
463	Bills: Provide detail of current consumption/rates/charges				
464	Bills: Allow multi-line user defined customer messages - vary by group				
465	Bills: Provide detail of components in billing calculation including provider of service, changes, etc.				
466	Print bills on demand by individual, date, group, etc.				
467	Multiple types of billing formats (i.e. postcards, mailers, stuffers)				
468	Print multiple bills to same or different address - either in individual or "summary" form				
469	Print bills by postal carrier route				
470	Delinquent bills and register				
471	Third party notification multiple letter/message formats				
500	Payments & Adjustments:				
501	Cash drawer & batch registers and balancing (anytime and end-of-shift)				
502	Automatic bank drafting				
503	Allocation of payments to appropriate funds automatically or by manual override (including Summary Account)				

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↴
504	Deferred payment arrangements including dates, amounts and details				
505	Provision for guaranteed payments				
506	Automatic management or override of delinquency with deferred payment arrangements				
507	Multiple user-defined miscellaneous fees at different intervals (Pet Licenses once a year, Impact Fee per month)				
508	Payments Register				
509	Adjustment Register				
510	Accounts Receivable Aging Report				
511	Returned check letter handling, user defined multiple format letters, returned check charge				
512	Maintain credit history - compute credit rating based upon payment history by user defined criteria				
513	Forward portion of payment to Service Component supplier				
600	Deposits				
601	Deposits - track receipt, refund, application to balance, transfer, etc. - maintain referenceable history & audit trail				
602	Calculation deposit interest by user-defined criteria				
603	Bill deposits, receive deposit with start of billing				
604	User-defined deposit allocation with both automatic application to balance/transfer/refund or manual override				
605	Deposit Register				
606	Refund checks and Register				
607	Split deposit to one or more customers for any amount				
608	Split transfer of deposit to one or more customers for any amount				
700	Service Orders				
701	Connect/Disconnect Order at customer contact				

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↴
702	Cross reference new Customer with existing Customers by name, Social Security Number, Drivers License, Telephone Number or other user-defined criteria				
703	Reference credit rating on new Account for a repeat Customer				
704	Access to external credit rating service				
705	Automatically transfer rental service to Owner/Landlord/Property Manager				
706	Account information transferred with Customer by user control (Meter Reader note of "Dog" with Customer, meter location with Service Location, aged Account balances, delinquency, deposit)				
707	Ability to reference and control shutoff process - include payment arrangements, reviewable before action				
708	Re-read orders: Customer inquiry, "Can't Read"/"Customer No-Access" letters				
709	Service Orders Register				
710	Provision for fees charged for shut-off and re-connect				
711	On-line access and control of Service Orders				
800	Meter/Service Information				
801	Meter Information: Number, vendor, model, type, size, phase, dials, multiplier, purchase order number & date, invoice number & date, etc.				
802	Meter Service Information: Life of Meter History, install date, Service Location, inspect dates, change date, etc.				
900	Inquiries, Histories, Audit Trails, Other Functions				
901	Inquiries, Histories & Audit Trails:				
903	User & menu defined (flexible) inquiry accesses and options				
904	Histories & audit trails on-line, display/print on demand with interactive and programmed selection and sequencing options				

City of Lodi
Utility Billing Features & Functions
Vendor: _____

Line No.	Feature & Functions	Yes	No	Comments	Additional Comments Attached ↓
905	Maintenance histories: Meter readings, consumption, life of meter, customer changes, location changes, service changes, billings and corrections, etc.				
906	Ability to include/exclude history and selected information				
907	User controlled history with unlimited retention				
920	Other Functions:				
921	Log all Customer contact with date, time, clerk, reason for contact, information given, free form additional notes				
922	Account inquiry ability showing charges by service & date, history, credit rating, meter information, location, etc.				
923	Open balance report (show unpaid balances selectively) - on-line access to open balances with selectivity				
924	Prepare refuse fees register for payment to refuse contractor				
925	Re-read activity Log & History				
926	Third party notification Log & History				
927	Archive and retrieval				
928	Reports & forms designed for line and laser printers				
929	Automatic Account cancellation and transfer to credit bureau by user-defined criteria				

City of Lodi
RFI: Vendor Questions
Vendor: _____

Please respond to the following questions. List the number of the question on a separate sheet of paper along with your response.

Support Issues

1. Do you do the initial setup of the software (creating tables, user codes, loading data, etc.) or do you contract with another company?
2. Does your company schedule and do the training for our technical and user staff or do you contract with another company?
3. How do you handle technical and user support? Do we have on-line access to your staff (ability to upload and/or download code, reports, documents, etc.)? What hours are available for support (5 days per week - 8 hours per day, 7 days per week - 24 hours per day, etc.)? What is your guaranteed response time to user problems (program defects, failures, etc.)?
4. How are updates (code replacements due to failure or bugs, etc.) to utility billing handled?
5. How are upgrades (new versions or releases) to utility billing handled?
6. How often do you issue new releases to utility billing (once a year, every two years, etc.)? Is this schedule guaranteed?
7. Is the source code supplied with the application?
8. Do you support user code? If so, how?
9. What is the level of technical support you provide? Do you provide hardware and/or communications advice or consulting (LAN / Wan / Remote Access / Internet / Kiosk, etc.)? How well do you adapt to distributed processing ?
10. What are your charges for additional or supplemental user and technical staff training? Are training classes offsite, onsite? Where are your offsite training centers located? Are there discounted training packages available? What is your training philosophy (train the trainers, train the users, etc.)? Is there on-line or Internet training available?

City of Lodi
RFI: Vendor Questions
Vendor: _____

11. Where would our site be supported from? Is it just phone support or does this support location have staff that can be scheduled to visit out site?
12. Is there a user group for utility billing? Is there one in our area (Northern California) ? How many customers are active in our area? Where do they meet? Are there national as well as regional groups? How often do they meet? Does your company attend these meetings? What type of support do you provide to the user groups? **Please submit a list of customers along with a contact name and phone number.**
14. How is maintenance charged? Are there discounts available for purchases of multiple modules (Accounts Receivable / Account Payable, General Accounting, etc.)? What are the charges for customized code? Is there an annual fee thereafter for the customized code? Is the customized code retained in new versions of utility billing? Would the customized code be available on the same time schedule as the regular release?
15. We are currently on a CISC based AS/400. If we decide to move to a RISC based AS/400 later, are there any additional charges?
16. What other platforms (HP midrange, PC based, etc.) do you support?
17. Does your software require licenses based of the number of concurrent users, size of CPU?
If we move to a larger CPU, is there a charge?

City of Lodi
RFI: Vendor Questions
Vendor: _____
Technical Issues

18. Is IVR (Interactive Voice Response) supported for utility billing? What hardware is required?
19. Is customer access by the Internet supported? By Kiosk? What hardware is required?
21. Does the system maintain statistics on number of transactions handled (types of transactions, by employee, etc.)? Can the statistics be referenced (detail or in summary) by day, week, month, employee, transaction type, etc.?
22. Is OS/400 V2R3 supported for utility billing? If not, what is the level of operating system necessary to support utility billing on the AS/400? If a new level of OS/400 is released, how long does it take you to be current?
Please answer the same questions concerning PC's.
23. Does your utility billing have client/server front end? If so, please explain the environment in which it works (hardware, software, supplied by whom)?
24. Does your utility billing have a GUI front end? If so, please explain the environment in which it works (hardware, software, supplied by whom)?
25. How do you prioritize customization requests? Is it first come, first served? Is it based on size of customer? Please explain.
26. How do you accommodate networked PC's? Do they all require special software or hardware to be able to access the utility billing system?
27. What is the average amount of time necessary to install, setup, and go live with utility billing? How is this timeline effected by addition vendor support?
28. Are there user defined fields available? If so, what are the limits (size, number, etc.)?
29. Does the utility billing have imaging? If so, is special hardware or software necessary to view the images?
30. Does the utility billing system use DB2/400 for its data base? If so, does it use the full functionality of the database (data dictionary, triggers, etc.)? If you do not use DB2/400, what do you use?
31. Does the utility billing system use a data warehouse?

City of Lodi
RFI: Vendor Questions
Vendor: _____

32. Did your company use a Case tool to develop utility billing? If so, which one and is it supplied with the package?
33. Please explain any built-in backup procedures (Entire database is backed up, changes only, etc.). Are journals used?
34. Please explain any built-in database restore procedures used in utility billing.
35. Does the utility billing system have built-in functions such as forecasting, projections, modeling, etc.?
36. Can the utility billing system do mass changes (grouping, rate type, business class, etc.)? What type of mass changes are possible?
37. How do you handle multiple register meters?
38. How do you account for "Lost" kilowatts (power not billed)?