

Electronic Bidding System Has Legs

Since the early days of Building Exchanges, facilitating and managing public construction bids has been a focal point for construction associations. The BC Construction Association (BCCA) and its Regional partners are no exception to this rule. For many years the BCCA and the Regions have operated a bid depository system and over the years it has been widely used in the public sector for such projects as educational facilities, hospitals and other public buildings. BCCA recognized, however, that in order to continue to provide a valuable service to its members it would be necessary to revamp it with an eye to the 21st century. Say "Hello" to the BCCA Electronic Bidding System (EBS).

Bid Depository has gone high tech. The EBS allows for the reception of secured bids from trade contractors electronically. The System was developed in concert with our technology partner, Infinite Source and it is an adjunct to the Electronic Planroom services offered across the province through our Regional Construction Associations.

In September of last year the BCCA launched the EBS with little fanfare. Recognizing the need to test the product we started off slowly, seeking appropriate projects to try things out on. We quickly determined that the on-line system provides a number of advantages for all stakeholders in the industry. It:

- ⇒ Substantially reduces the potential for bidders to submit non-compliant bids.
- ⇒ Allows general contractors to receive bids in an efficient electronic format that allows a quicker more reliable method of analyzing the bids.
- ⇒ Reduces the impact on the environment by decreasing the use of paper and the carbon foot print from vehicles used to transport bids.

New BCCA Policy on Qualification of Bidders

BCCA's current policy on qualification of bidders is through CCDC 23 'A Guide to Calling Bids and Awarding Contracts' and the Public

To date the EBS has been utilized successfully in five public projects on the lower mainland. Trade contractors using the system reported that they were pleased with the system pointing out that it streamlined the bidding process and eliminated that last minute rush and the stress that goes with it. It also significantly reduced the need to make phone calls to find out who else was bidding.

Training sessions have been and continue to be provided by BCCA through the Regional Associations to make sure that the industry has the support it needs to use the system. Already over 300 users have taken the training workshops which have been held in every area of the province. BCCA recognizes that further training workshops may be needed and we are prepared to set those up where the need is shown.

While all of the projects using the system have so far been in the lower mainland, a project to build a healthcare facility in Prince George has opted to use it as has Defence Construction Canada for a project on Vancouver Island. We expect to see its use increase steadily in the next year.


BCCA's EBS has successfully revitalized the bid depository, increasing its appeal by making the collection of information more responsive and less time consuming to the users. We anticipate that it will also evolve into a system for collection of bids from general contractors to owners. It is simply too useful a tool to keep in a box. If you haven't yet had a chance to attend one of the training workshops in your area or if you would like more information on the EBS, please let us, or your Regional Construction Association, know. We will do our best to bring you up to speed.

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Construction Council's Procedures and Guidelines Recommended for Use on Publicly Funded Construction Projects. The PCCBC

Guidelines advises that ‘bidders should not be requested to provide qualification information at the time of bidding. A clause requiring the successful low bidder to provide such information prior to acceptance of the bid is appropriate’. However, on recent discussions with public owners it appears that when we have made reference to this Guideline it is possibly being interpreted to mean that owners can consider this post bid closing information in evaluation of the bids and perhaps use it to disqualify a bidder. It has always been BCCA’s position that having bidders go through the expense to bid and then be disqualified over qualification criteria is unacceptable.

BCCA and its regional associations recognize the need for pre-qualification in limited circumstances. Generally the ability of the contractor to secure the necessary bonds is the sole criteria by which contractors should be pre-qualified. The February 19, 2004 version of the Public Construction Council Recommended Guidelines for the Use of Pre-qualification of General Contractors and Trade Contractors represents the Association’s

policy on Pre-Qualification.

The BCCA Board asked its Standards & Practices Committee to consider options and provide recommendations. At a recent Board Meeting the following **Bidder Qualification Policy** was adopted:

On public funded projects of \$100,000 or more a contractor’s ability to bid is determined solely by the bidder’s capability to provide bonding. A clause requiring a bidder to submit details of their experience or financial status in the bid documents, should not be included. BCCA believes that all qualified firms, without limiting the number of bidders, should be permitted to bid on publicly funded projects of \$100,000 or more, and that on such projects, bidders’ lists should not be restricted to an “invited” list. If the contract is awarded, it is awarded to the lowest compliant bidder.

BCCA policies can be viewed on line at www.bccassn.com

BCCA Welcomes 2010 Board of Directors at New Office

The BCCA is pleased to announce that it has moved its office to 401-655 Tyee Road, Victoria. The new office offers more space to accommodate program staff and facilitate meetings. On Friday January 29th the Annual General Meeting was held at the new office and the following Executive and Directors were sworn in:

- ⇒ **Chair** – Anibal Valente, PCL Constructors Westcoast Inc, Richmond
- ⇒ **Vice Chair** – Dan Boissevain, LB Paving Ltd, Smithers
- ⇒ **Treasurer** – Duane Fournier, Fournier Excavating, Nanaimo
- ⇒ **Past Chair** – Steve Pavelich, Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services, Kelowna
- ⇒ Director – Don Schuster, Forma Construction Ltd, Vernon
- ⇒ Director – Patrick Waunch, Rambow Mechanical, Kelowna
- ⇒ Director – Phil Long, Dominion Fairmile Construction Ltd, Kelowna

- ⇒ Director – Sue Zacharias, United Concrete & Gravel, Williams Lake
- ⇒ Director – Russ Polsom, Blackwater Construction Co. Ltd, Prince George
- ⇒ Director – Graham McIntosh, The Guarantee Company of North America, Vancouver
- ⇒ Director – Don Nishimura, Scott Construction Group, Vancouver
- ⇒ Director – Ron McFee, Stuart Olson Constructors Inc, Richmond
- ⇒ Director – Carole Bissett, Jardine Lloyd Thompson Canada Inc, Victoria
- ⇒ Director – Ross McLean, Houle Electric Ltd, Victoria

This will be the second year of a two year term for Chair, Anibal Valente and the other members of the Executive.

We invite all members and friends to come by and see our new office. The coffee is on!



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The mission of the BCCA is to provide leadership and excellence in the representation of and service to British Columbia’s construction industry