

# Website Request for Proposals

## Summary

Piedmont Municipal Power Agency (PMPA®)<sup>1</sup> is accepting proposals to develop PMPA's Public, Private and Intranet websites in an integrated SharePoint and Kentico CMS-like environment. The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to provide a fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide the candidates with the evaluation criteria against which they will be judged.

The existing PMPA public website was originally designed and produced in 1996 and modified in succeeding years until 2005. SharePoint was implemented in 2009 for increased business efficiencies and document management. The sites are currently maintained internally by PMPA's IT department and are hosted on PMPA servers.

**This RFP, originally released June 01, 2011, resulted in responses that exceeded PMPA's fiscal goals for the project. PMPA is re-releasing this RFP and asking respondents to segregate pricing for each website to better facilitate proposal acceptability. Each respondent is encouraged to further sub-classify pricing within each website category as they see fit to provide greater depth of understanding of the proposal and fiscal consequences of the project details.**

## Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

This is an open and competitive process. Proposals received after 5:00 PM EST, October 14, 2011, will not be considered and will be returned unopened. The proposal must contain the signature of a duly authorized officer or agent of the company submitting the proposal.

The price quoted in the proposal must be all-inclusive. If the quoted price excludes certain fees or charges, a detailed list of excluded fees, with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees, must be provided. Furthermore, the price quoted in the proposal must be sub-divided by website type (Public, Participants, and Intranet) described below.

If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of sub-contractors this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined. In the proposal please provide the name, address, and EIN of any and all subcontractors. PMPA will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however, PMPA retains the right to refuse the selected sub-contractors.

Provisions of this RFP and the contents of the successful responses are considered available for inclusion in final contractual obligations. PMPA reserves the right to reject any and all proposal submissions.

## Contract Terms

PMPA will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by PMPA legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget and other necessary items.

## Purpose, Description and Objectives

### Purpose

PMPA currently has a web presence that is outdated in appearance, structure and presentation of content. An opportunity exists to re-engineer the site to better brand and co-promote all PMPA Participants, organize the site for easier navigation, implement social media functionality, improve organic search engine optimization (SEO) and incorporate latest web technologies. Upon completion of the development of the sites, PMPA will take full responsibility for website content maintenance and administration. All content, coding and graphics will become the sole property of PMPA. If there is a requirement for future web work outside of the technical capabilities of PMPA staff, PMPA may engage the successful bidder on a per-project or per-month basis.

### Description

Create three interdependent web presences for PMPA's key audiences:

- 1) A quickly downloadable, flexible and informative public website that is easy to maintain. A user-friendly site that can deliver large amounts of information, some of which will be changing on a regular basis. In addition to designing a user-friendly site with an intuitive interface, PMPA also requires a web-based, database-driven administration tool that allows staff members to easily update content without directly accessing source code. PMPA currently uses SharePoint as its content management system which allows for the majority of the content to be updated. However, PMPA requires a more robust, user-friendly environment for content management, similar to the Kentico CMS application.
- 2) A PMPA Participants private website (extranet) for Participant-specific access to industry and related information, meeting dates and agendas, power load and quality information, policies, legislative issues and other information for the sole use of PMPA Participants. PMPA requires a more robust, user-friendly environment for content management for this site as well.
- 3) A user-friendly employee intranet for document search, access and management in the SharePoint environment. This internal website is for the sole use of PMPA employees for the sharing of information pertinent to business operations and internal collaboration.

To be effective, PMPA's websites must be:

- Quick to load and operate
- Easy and intuitive
- Visually pleasing and informative
- Light on bandwidth
- Protected, with role-based security

### Objectives

The primary Internet objective is to continue to build brand identity, awareness, and interest in the PMPA Member Municipalities and utilities, and the services they provide. The external key focus is on Economic Development, the internal key focus on business operations support.

## Vision

- Maximize web-based technologies
- Enhance relationships with residents, visitors, businesses and stakeholders
- Build customer loyalty among Members' residents and businesses
- Enhance PMPA and Members' organizational relationships
- Provide focused, web-based solutions

## Specific Strategies

- Increase visitation via organic search (Public)
- Generate more Economic Development leads for our Participants (Public)
- Present comprehensive information and resources in an easy-to-use format (Public, Participant, Intranet)
- Provide for social interaction via links to social networks (Public)
- Incorporate blog platform, RSS, landing pages, video streams and SEO (Public, Participant, Intranet)
- Incorporate Content Management System to allow for easy updating (Public, Participant)
- Strengthen relationships with community partners, Members, Members' customers and other local and regional organizations (Public, Participant)
- Improve business efficiencies (Participant, Intranet)
- Increase site promotion activities (Public, Participant)
- Deliver a consistent message (Public, Participant, Intranet)
- Deliver a scalable, maintainable web foundation (Public, Participant)

PMPA will convey its story through the use of compelling visuals, intuitive navigation, concise messaging, and interactive participation by:

- Redesign of the sites to deliver intuitive navigation, an improved graphical user interface, and easy-to-find, participatory content organization.
- Development of tools to deliver timely, relevant information to the full breadth and depth of visitor inquiry.
- Reinforcement of the PMPA Members' brand to site visitors.

## Timeline

This re-released RFP is dated September 15, 2011. Proposers may also request a copy be sent via email by contacting Tracy Quinn at [tquinn@pmpa.com](mailto:tquinn@pmpa.com). Proposals are due no later than 5pm, EST October 14, 2011. Proposals will be evaluated immediately thereafter. During this evaluation time, interviews may be required at PMPA's office with the evaluation team on or about October 24-28, 2011. Proposers may be requested to appear.

The name of the candidate firm that has been selected will be decided on or about October 31, 2011. Negotiations will begin immediately with the successful candidate and should conclude no later than November 04, 2011. All other candidates will be notified on or about November 07, 2011. The project

will consist of one website of the three requested and must be completed and delivered by December 22, 2011.

## **Background of Organization**

PMPA is a joint action agency formed by ten municipal electric utilities in the northwest section of South Carolina. The Agency provides wholesale electric services to its Members primarily through a 25 percent ownership interest in unit 2 of the Catawba Nuclear Station, located in York County, South Carolina. PMPA is governed by our Board of Directors and operates in the public arena. One director and one alternate are appointed from each Member by the elected city councils or utility commissions governing the local utilities. PMPA, incorporated in 1979, was formed by, and continues to provide wholesale electric services to, ten municipal utilities in the upstate of South Carolina. These ten member utilities serve the cities of Abbeville, Clinton, Easley, Gaffney, Greer, Laurens, Newberry, Rock Hill, Union and Westminster. PMPA was created to purchase an ownership interest in the Catawba Nuclear Station in order to secure a reliable source of electric generation for its member utilities. Through membership in PMPA, the ten city utilities pool their resources to take advantage of economies of scale. PMPA as a whole can accomplish things that would not be possible for one city utility to do alone. Economic development is one arena that benefits immensely from the economies of scale.

PMPA's Members are also referred to as Participants in the PMPA project. These terms are used interchangeably throughout this document.

### **Mission**

PMPA is a joint-action agency that provides its Members with reliable, wholesale electric services at the lowest possible rates, value-added services which enhance their continued success, and a forum in which they can work together for the betterment of all.

### **Services Overview**

PMPA is empowered to determine what services it should offer to help its Members preserve or enhance the general health, safety and welfare of their respective communities. Current services include:

- Wholesale Electric Services
- Transmission Services
- Operations Services
- Financial/Rates Services
- Information Technology Services
- Telecommunications Services

The PMPA Members' customer base is composed of Commercial, Industrial and Residential users of electric service, water and wastewater services, and other municipally-operated utilities.

### **Members**

The ten PMPA Members' municipalities range in size from approximately 2,400 to over 66,000 and are located in a ten-county region of the upstate of South Carolina.

## Target Audience

### Primary:

Potential business prospects, PMPA Members, Members' organizations, community leaders and employees.

### Secondary:

Current Upstate businesses and residents, bondholders, regional visitors

## Scope & Guidelines

The scope of this project is to update all three existing PMPA websites. PMPA's various departments will create/provide all of the site copy and provide the successful candidate, with that candidate's guidance, any necessary original and stock photography. A firm that can handle all interface design, programming and production is required. The site must include a technology solution that allows PMPA's in-house staff to easily and cost effectively update content and modify site design after initial launch.

### Discovery:

Confirm audiences, objectives, graphic look and feel, navigation, site marketing, technology issues and assumptions, required functionality, and budgetary constraints, resulting in a creative brief. Discovery will include key elements of wireframe and platform recommendations performed for PMPA by a third party with elements of those recommendations found in "Attachment 1" at the end of this document.

### Design:

Website information architecture, graphic look and feel, user navigation, home page and main navigation templates for each of the main navigation links for each website, based on provided wireframes.

### Development Guidelines:

The websites designed by the successful candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Implementation of an easy-to-use content management system that will permit non-technical PMPA staff to instantly update website content on specific pages.
- Convert substantial amount of existing content to new website.
- Be visually appealing – The site must have an attractive mix of text and graphics, based on wireframes
- Common Theme – All websites should have a similar look and feel with clear distinctions between site types
- Easy to Navigate – The site should be easy to navigate. Information should be grouped and presented in a logical manner and require no more than three levels of "drill down" for the user to find the desired information.
- Development of web pages to accommodate the proposed navigation scheme.
- Provide necessary software and licenses to maintain the site internally by PMPA.

- ListServ capabilities.
- Provide search capabilities using key words or phrasing that will identify content from throughout the site.
- Map interfaces for all Member locations on website
- Project Management – An assigned project manager function will be made available to present information and coordinate with PMPA staff, including a reasonable number of meetings to present development solutions (meetings and phone calls are complimentary).
- Once the websites have been completed and accepted by PMPA, the website design and all of its content, software and architecture become property of PMPA.
- Refining and optimizing messaging throughout each site's header real estate space
- Social networking links to upload content of meetings and events
- Usability, code, and SEO audit through each site. This will ensure a better user experience, site validation and create greater awareness of current programs and services.
- Cross browser accessibility (IE6-8, Firefox3-4, Chrome, Safari).

#### Site Specifications:

PMPA encourages creativity in the proposals submitted; however there are certain requirements for the website project. Your proposal must account for all of these requirements:

- Site must be compatible with IE, Mozilla and other current browsers.
- Website must not require plug-ins as a default.
- Meets ADA requirements – The site should be developed to meet all Federally-mandated access requirements under section 508, sub-part B, sub-section 1194.22 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Site must be built in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, provided by the W3C and should be easily accessible to the novice as well as the experienced Internet user.
- Fast Loading Pages – The websites must be designed with a balance of text and graphics such that each page loads in 8 seconds or less on an average computer using a dial-up connection.
- Site must be accessible on PDA devices.
- A development or staging site is required, and some sort of version control system for the code base. The content should also remain independent of the code base except where there are dynamic/user input features where hard-coding or locking the pages is required.

#### Testing:

Conduct testing of site on all applicable platforms and browsers to ensure entire website works as contracted. Explain the testing plan through the development and testing processes.

#### Delivery:

Delivery and uploading of site to client for internal hosting.

#### Tracking:

Implementation of tracking software to produce user defined site log reports. PMPA requires a tool to help better understand and measure web visitors' behavior and improve website performance and availability. Currently no analytics are being used.

- Web traffic analysis
- Path analysis

- Visitor trends
- Page views
- Entry pages
- Top pages
- Exit pages
- Page – length of stay
- Technical analysis: browsers and platforms

## **Available Technology Resources / Integration Issues**

- We will use much of our existing web content. New content will be identified through interviews, discussion and existing documentation.
- Some existing databases will need to be imported or connected to the new site.

## **Qualifications**

- List at least five websites that your firm has produced that best reflect your work and relevancy to this project. Briefly list the role your firm played in each project. The URL should be submitted. Only sites that are live will qualify during evaluation.
- Describe your experience in producing sites for government agencies, recreation, economic development and community-focused projects.
- Min of five (5) years of verifiable experience designing, developing and implementing enterprise-level web applications.
- Knowledgeable in Web 2.0 functionalities
- Experienced in SEO standards
- Proficient in UI design
- Innovative, creative, proactive, observant, problem-solver who is deadline oriented.
- Provide current reference information for three former or current clients.
- Briefly describe your firm's organizational capacity to produce our website (e.g. staff, equipment, software, physical space, office location, etc.)
- How many full-time staff does your company employ? Please, include a copy of your firm's organizational chart.
- Provide a company profile, length of time in business and core competencies.
- What type of team will be assigned to this project? What will each person's role be? Please include a brief background summary for each key staff member assigned to this project.
- Briefly describe your firm's project management process.
- Please, discuss your testing and support plan.
- Please explain your service level agreement structure.
- Include timeframe for completion. The timeframe for completion of the project will be evaluated. In addition, timeframes will be part of the contractual agreement; therefore, a realistic timeframe for completion is requested.
- Terms and conditions.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

The following criteria will form the basis upon which PMPA will evaluate proposals. The mandatory criteria must be met and include:

Three (3) copies of your proposal must be received no later than 5:00 PM, EST July 15, 2011. Your proposal must include a cost proposal as described above. All costs associated with the delivery of the project should be presented in a flat rate, fee-for-service format.

Deliver proposals to the attention of:

Jeffery S. Bridgland  
Piedmont Municipal Power Agency  
121 Village Drive  
Greer, SC 29651

Proposals that meet the mandatory requirements, as stated above, will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- Suitability of the proposal – the proposed solution meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP.
- Expertise in recommending and communicating appropriate technical and aesthetic solutions as evidenced by the proposal and references.
- Aesthetic capabilities – Prior work demonstrates artistic and innovative, user friendly interfaces that engage communities and viewers.
- Candidate experience – Candidate has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake this project.
- Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels – The price is commensurate with the value offered by the proposer.
- Depth and Breadth of Staff – The candidate firm has appropriate staff to develop the site in the timeframe needed.
- Proposal Presentation – The information is presented in a clear, logical manner and is well organized.
- Demonstrated commitment to high service level agreements.

## **Format for Proposals**

Please use the following as a guideline to format your proposal:

Please use fonts no smaller than 11 points.

Title Page:

PMPA Website Development Proposal, your company name, address, website address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and primary contact person.

Cover Letter:

Signed by the person or persons authorized to sign on behalf of the company.



Proposal:

Discuss your proposed solution, including the features, benefits and uniqueness of your solution. You should also touch on your ability to deliver the project in the timeframe noted.

Qualifications:

Provide the information requested in Qualifications Section.

Budgets and Fees:

List budgets as requested. Identify staff you anticipate working on this project and their hourly rates for work needed. Provide budgets for each of the three website independently.

## Questions

Questions concerning information provided in this RFP may be submitted via e-mail to:

[jbridgland@mpa.com](mailto:jbridgland@mpa.com)

Responses to questions will be posted to PMPA's website in the RFP section. Questions must be received no later than 5:00 PM EST, October 07, 2011.