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Route To:

Subject: Competitive Solicitation Plan for EERAs, EaTIS and VIPR

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

Competitive Solicitation Plan

Enclosed is the National Solicitation Plan for Competitive Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs.) Exhibit A outlines the national strategy for phasing in competition of equipment and services procured through preseason EERAs as recommended by the Office of Inspector General (OIG Report No. 08601-40-SF, July 2005). This plan is the cornerstone for incorporating Federal Acquisition Regulation principles into incident procurements and fulfilling our commitments to OIG.

The four year phase-in will begin this fiscal year. **All units are required** to competitively solicit preseason EERAs for all water handling equipment as identified on the plan.

Each solicitation will utilize national specifications and best value criteria. A national solicitation template will be ready for use mid-February for equipment categories solicited in FY07.

While the solicitation plan displays the number of items to be solicited each year, each piece of equipment does not necessarily require a separate solicitation. It is recommended that like equipment/services be combined on a single solicitation. For example, "big iron" – dozer, forwarder, feller buncher, backhoe, road grader and skidder – should be competed together.

Not every geographic area utilizes all the equipment listed on the plan. You will not be required to solicit for equipment that does not meet your anticipated incident needs. Conversely, not all equipment used within your geographic area is listed. Units are required to determine whether competitive solicitation is warranted for equipment that may be unique to regional emergency incident needs as opposed to other methods of competition or sole source. Regional AQM and FAM personnel will need to develop specifications, typing, features, and best value criteria for soliciting this unique equipment. These solicitations should be added to the solicitation plan for your unit. You are encouraged to work with other units in jointly developing the solicitations if the equipment type is common to another region/station/agency.

Some items procured preseason by use of EERAs may be of a low dollar value or used in such small quantities that they would not justify issuing a solicitation. These items are listed on exhibit B, along with a short justification. Exhibit C lists items where follow-up work is either in progress or planned. (See worksheet tabs in spreadsheet for enclosures.)

Until the year of scheduled implementation, units may acquire items as they have in the past using normal procurement tools available. However, as directed in the 6300/5100 letter dated



February 9, 2006 and contained in the EaTIS Business Rules, all regions must adhere to national standards for equipment typing and methods of hire for all incident procurement, preseason or at the incident. The method of hire chart can be found at:

http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/eatis/eera/national_standards.php

Consistency of acquisition methodology is a critical objective of this effort and deviation from the methods of hire, equipment typing, or templates is not permitted. Questions concerning the national competitive solicitation plan, templates, and methods of hire should be directed to Ron Schilz/WO/USDAFS.

Use of EaTIS in FY07 and FY08

The Equipment and Training Inventory System (EaTIS) will be used in FY07 by the original pilot regions 1, 5 and 6 for solicitation of water handling equipment. Soliciting buses is optional, but EaTIS will accommodate this if a pilot region so chooses. Non-pilot units will competitively solicit water handling equipment outside of EaTIS, using manual methods and the old EERA database.

EaTIS will also be used to facilitate electronic payments for aviation contracts. Therefore, **all units** must enter their flight services contracts as defined under FSM 5711-22 into EaTIS. Please see the issue paper for clarification at <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/FESSAA/>. EaTIS now supports the entry of contract modifications and allows the initial record to start with an existing modification number. Questions concerning aviation contracts should be directed to Byron Brown/WO/USDAFS.

EaTIS will be maintained through FY08 for aviation purposes and to manage equipment belonging to the pilot regions.

New System - VIPR

A new web-based application is being developed to replace the EaTIS prototype. The Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) System is planned for deployment for the 2009 fire season in all regions. Data in EaTIS will be moved to VIPR.

It is critical for field personnel to participate in development of VIPR. Further communication is forthcoming. Please check the project website at <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/VIPR> or contact Larry D Bowser/WO/USDAFS for system questions on either EaTIS or VIPR.

/s/ Ronald E. Hooper
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Enclosure

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