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State to launch modernization project that will improve services for taxpayers

Efforts to update technology and increase efficiency will result in increased tax collections; Key project partners include diverse vendors

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Revenue will launch a comprehensive Tax Modernization Project this fall as part of the agency’s efforts to improve taxpayer services, update technology, and enhance operations of state government. The new tax system is the central component in a five-year project that will return over \$250 million in increased tax collections to the state. Enhanced technology will replace separate computer systems – some of them 30 years old – that were built as new tax laws were implemented.

The new tax system will allow the department to better manage data that now resides on multiple tax systems or is available from outside sources to identify taxpayers who are not paying tax that they owe. Taxpayers will benefit by being able to get a complete view of all the taxes they pay, allowing them, for example, to use an overpayment in one tax to meet a liability in another.

“Illinois taxpayers will be better served as a result of this project that is unparalleled in its size and scope because individuals and businesses will have better and more services from their government,” said Revenue Director Brian Hamer. “The new technology will improve our operations, while ensuring a higher level of tax compliance.”

FAST Enterprises has been selected for the \$45 million project that will upgrade and integrate the state’s tax systems over the next five years. The vendor will rely upon several Illinois-based diverse vendors to complete this project as a result of a 19% diverse business participation goal that was recommended in the state’s request for proposals.

FAST was one of four firms that responded to a request for proposals issued by the Department of Revenue in May. The 10-member department team that reviewed the proposals ranked FASTs offering as the top technical proposal. It was also the lowest priced of the four.

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The vendor is expected to start work on October 1. Two of the firm's founders and top executives – as well as several other key project leads – will be relocating to Springfield to support the project. FAST works exclusively with tax systems and has installed or is installing its GenTax product at 14 tax agencies including British Columbia, New Mexico, Louisiana, Alabama, and Wisconsin.

This project also was subject to diverse business participation goals that the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) is recommending on procurements. FAST selected several partner companies through CMS' Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which promotes contracting opportunities for women, minorities and persons with disabilities. FAST is expected to award more than \$8.5 million in projects to registered BEP vendors.

“Because of important policy changes that have come to fruition under the Blagojevich administration, state government today is playing an important role in creating opportunities for women- and minority-owned businesses. More and more companies can grow and expand and play an important role in making projects like this a reality,” said CMS Director Paul Campbell.

Altogether, through diverse vendor participation goals, the state has created more than \$50 million in new opportunities for businesses owned by minorities, women and persons with disabilities since January 1, 2006.