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FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Racine Security Management Project

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FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Racine Security Management Project

Grant Award 1999LTVXK013

Amount: \$ 100,358.00

The goal of the Racine Security Management Project was to install a security system to ensure safety and security for high school students and staff efficiently, effectively, and at a reasonable cost. This goal occurred as a result of the District's then crisis response person putting a team together which was approved for training by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the School Multi-Hazard Safety Train the Trainer course. The availability of this grant funding was shared at that training. Coincidentally, the Columbine tragedy had occurred about two weeks in advance of the Racine team going to FEMA. FEMA had contacted the District neighboring Columbine to send a team to this particular training session. The writer's prior experiences with crisis response, combined with the FEMA training and advantages of information-sharing by staff from Columbine's neighboring district, and supported by information from Advanced Technologies, Inc., which provided the District's existing security protocol, enabled the grant application to be conceived and developed.

The objectives of the project were to demonstrate that daily safety and security can be achieved at a large urban high school, in a manner that:

- is cost effective
- can be accomplished in a building which is nearly 100 years old, with its most recent addition being built in the 1960's, thus involves significant and creative retrofitting
- retains student, staff and visitor dignity
- is highly automated yet does not require complex staff training or significant increases in staff
- is authorized-user friendly but intruder prohibitive

- allows immediate egress from every exit in the event of an emergency
- allows the school to be locked down completely, if necessary
- provides instantaneous information from a remote location as well as from within the building, regarding who is and is not in the school at any given time

The Racine Security Management Project has truly turned out to be what it needed to be to initially qualify for NIJ funding as a "beyond state of the art" project regarding school security. The proof of that is in the delays which the project has been subjected to, frequently due to its uniqueness. This final report will provide an overview of the issues which have impacted upon the project and its components.

Regarding the William Horlick High School segment:

The high school selected for this project is a building which is nearly 100 years old, with its most recent addition being of late 1960's vintage. The building sprawls across a large land area, and is really a combination of buildings and additions put together to make up the high school. Retrofitting this old structure incorporated numerous challenges, none of which proved insurmountable to those with the will to accomplish the project successfully. The building challenges included:

- Installation had to accommodate whether or not a portion of the building had a basement, a crawl space, or was constructed on top of only a concrete foundation. This also drove the location of the wiring, which in turn drove the type of installation and components required to meet code.
- Original installation locations were determined by those developing on the project. Upon getting into the building, input was received regarding building use issues in specific areas,

which in turn required some of the installation locations to be modified.

- Some of the modified installation areas, as well as some of the original ones, necessitated going through walls and floors which were found to contain asbestos. Work in those areas had to immediately cease, the areas had to be sealed, and appropriate removal arrangements had to be made and accomplished. Each time this scenario occurred, the project was both delayed, and made more expensive than originally budgeted.
- Although building "plans" existed, as installation proceeded it became very apparent that those plans were not consistently updated as changes to the building, its electricals and other components were added or modified. The most significant event demonstrating this problem was when the first hole drilled into the floor severed the main power supply to the building, which had not been noted anywhere on the building drawings. Fortunately, the hole was being drilled into the floor, thus the person doing the drilling was not exerting a great amount of force. Had more force been needed and used, the shield would have been penetrated and serious injury or worse could easily have resulted.
- Since the installation was occurring in an existing building, it had to be done around various existing components, especially within the fieldhouse. Doing so required considerable creativity to accomplish appropriate installation without interfering with existing elements, such as basketball hoops, building columns, and more.

Other miscellaneous issues, problems and concerns included the following:

- Upon the grant being awarded to Racine Unified, the individuals who had developed the project and written the grant application were removed from the project, and it was given over to others to facilitate. Those assigned lacked comprehensive understanding of the components, did not desire input from those who designed the project, and in fact worked at securing a different vendor for project installation. As these issues played out, a seven-month delay evolved in obtaining a contractual arrangement to allow the project to begin. Several serious meetings were needed to get the project on track in accordance with the original design and intentions of the grant application. Finally that occurred, this writer was again in the project loop, and the project was ready to commence.
- Now another delay presented itself. Unknown at the time of grant application writing, the building was scheduled to receive new exterior doors. It was determined that the doors should be installed prior to the project proceeding, or much duplication of work would be occurring. The door project was delayed, thus the security project was delayed even further.
- The project was really getting started around the time it should have been completed. Extensions of time needed to be sought and granted to continue the project. However, a most significant related problem, was that the vendor had workers available according to the original timeline for completion. By the time the delays had been overcome, the vendors employees were very committed to other projects. Adding qualified staff to begin work on the project was challenging due to the shortage of skilled labor in the area, to say the least. As well, the installation was supposed to have occurred during the summer months, when school was not in session. The delays caused the installation to occur during the school year. That, in turn, determined when workers could be in the building, and in which locations of the building. Essentially, much of the work had to be moved to

second and third shift operations, resulting in some increased labor costs.

- As the installation proceeded, rather than work fairly continuously absent students in the building, students were now in the building. This presented challenges of a variety not generally experienced in other (business) types of installations, and the project installation became the frequent target of student vandalism by those not wishing the project to move forward. The vendors had to create new ways to minimize the damage and replacement costs of the vandalism. Often those new ways called for major changes in how the installation proceeded, where, and when, and those changes caused further delays.
- The student vandalism extended to the type of card being used for building entry. It was originally believed that a card which would be reusable could be used. However, students quickly determined how to sabotage those cards; even how to remove their personal information and trade the card with another student. Subsequently, it became apparent that a different type of card needed to be used. Sadly, that type of card, similar to a credit card, drives the per card price up dramatically, and is not reusable year after year. Funding has been obtained to purchase the more expensive cards for the 2002-2003 school year. Beyond that time, the District will need to work at determining how to fund the more expensive cards. Perhaps as students become accustomed to and embrace the security protocol, it may be possible to return to the type of card originally intended to be used. The original card design can still be used for other types of building access, however.
- As with all "different" things intruding upon one's "world", much speculation, outright gossip and rumors evolved claiming to know "why" the security protocol was being installed. People had a "big

brother" mentality about the project, feeling that it existed to determine the location of staff (in other words, are they getting to work on time and/or leaving early... are they exiting the building at times when they should not be, and so forth), as opposed to its true purpose. A series of meetings, and many conversations, have hopefully dispelled most of those rumors.

- Fortunately, the City of Racine has an excellent inspection department. Officials from that department graciously made frequent site visits to help guide the installation so it would conform to all local, state, and federal codes. The down side, of course, is that some things had to be done over if the installation was less than perfect the first time, if a pipe was bent which should not have been, and so forth.
- Finally, limited School District staffing has contributed to some of the delays. The press of many responsibilities precluded allocation of time sufficient to stay on top of the project and shepherd it to a more speedy conclusion.

At the present time, all installation has been completed at Horlick. Variances have been applied for, as some project components require same before the system can be operational. Several inspections have already taken place. As the variance process moves forward, a series of intermittent inspections will occur during the summer of 2002, hopefully culminating with receipt of the variance, allowing the system to be fully operational with the start of the 2002-2003 school year.

Regarding the Garfield Elementary School segment:

Subsequent to obtaining the grant funding, the School Board generated a referendum package which included demolition of the majority of Garfield Elementary School. The building was more than

100 years old, and it was determined that bringing it up to codes in many areas, would be even more expensive than demolition and replacement. Also, there was a desire to have a quality facility in a deteriorating neighborhood, and have it serve as a neighborhood school. As a result, it has not been possible to proceed with the cameras intended to be installed for monitoring at Garfield School. However, during that same time period, it was discovered that there were some errors in determining the original project costs, thus funding for the cameras as part of the grant was not going to be possible. It was also determined, of course, that security camera installation was required as it was a part of this grant. In that regard, the security camera protocol described and included in this original grant application, has been incorporated into the building plans for Garfield, so complete grant compliance will occur.

Should there be any questions regarding this project or this report, please contact Karen Albeck at the Racine Unified School District, 2220 Northwestern Avenue, Racine, WI 53404; phone at (262) 631-7198, or email at kalbeck66@Yahoo.com.

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