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Revenue Recovery's New Computer System Saving Costs and Time

Sacramento, CA - The custom-designed computer system for the Department of Revenue Recovery (DRR) has been operational since 2009 and is saving the County millions of dollars in operating costs and staff time.

"The system has allowed us to reduce staffing by 44 percent and will begin saving about $5M annually from this year forward, said Connie Ahmed, Director of Revenue and Recovery. "Overall we are very pleased with the system's effectiveness."

Sacramento County hired an outside vendor to perform an independent technical assessment of the new system and, as expected with any complex system, the report points out several technical deficiencies that will need to be addressed.

The vendor, Eclipse Solutions, was hired to review the maintainability, design and coding standards, performance, and security compared to industry best practices for the system, known as DMACS, or Debt Management and Collection System. They were also asked to identify issues that needed consideration in order to reduce annual support requirements.

"While we're disappointed that the system has issues that need to be addressed, the most important issue is that the system is operational and we have already reaped tremendous savings, not only in operating costs, but in staff time," Ahmed said.

"Any good system development process should include independent verification," said Rami Zakaria, Chief Information Officer. "The system is functioning well and we are developing a plan to address the technical deficiencies listed in the report." Starting January, 2012, the DMACS support team is moving under the direction of the County department of Technology, said Rami Zakaria, Chief Information Officer. "This will help us address and monitor the issues more effectively."

The report points out areas that need further attention including the quality and security of the data, documentation, design, and coding standards. As standard practice, DRR runs daily quality check scripts to verify data integrity and the Department of Technology will be developing design fixes and adding security layers to insure the data integrity. They will also be developing plans to improve the system design and documentation so that the system can be fully operated and maintained with in-house staff.

System Savings:

Since the 2009 deployment, the system has allowed DRR to reduce staff levels from 100 to 54 (44% reduction), saving $3.4M in labor cost, plus an additional $1.M in staff related costs such as space and equipment, all while maintaining revenue collection levels. The total annual budget savings going forward will be $5M.

About the Project:

Approximately $11.2 M was budgeted for project development over a period of years, and the expenses are running at $10 M.
- The system has been up and running since February 2009.
- The project is moving ahead as planned, within budget
- The first fixed- cost enhancement was successfully implemented June 11, 2011 and the last "fixed cost enhancement" is scheduled for implementation in January 2012. The "fixed cost projects" automate manual and temporary processes.

About the Review:
- A request for Proposal was issued by our General Services Department to complete the independent review. One company responded, and after the County completed the purchasing review and evaluation, the contract was awarded to Eclipse Solutions for $51,000 in late June 2011 for the system review.
- We have a training plan and strategy to address priority issues so that no additional funds will be needed.

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