

Evaluation of Telecom Proposals for E-Rate year July 2015-June 2016

January 30, 2014

Marmot issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for "Telecommunication Services for a Private Wide Area Network" on November 3, 2014. Four vendors submitted proposals.

Two vendors proposed solutions for all 30 sites managed by Marmot. For the cost comparison, partial solutions proposed by 2 other vendors were made complete by assuming Marmot would continue using the current provider, Mammoth Networks, on existing month-to-month terms for sites not addressed in partial solutions.

The following summary of monthly recurring charges (MRC) is also adjusted to include non-recurring charges (NRC) spread across 36-month contracts.

Bid	Vendor(s)	Total MRC
No bid	Mammoth, Cedar, etc.	\$15,908
1	Cedar	\$16,037
2	Charter etc.	\$17,776
3	Cogent etc.	\$23,921
4	Affiniti	\$32,315

No-bid Mammoth

Last year Mammoth responded to the Marmot RFP/470 by stating they would honor original 36-month prices when contracts went month-to-month, as most did in the summer of 2014. This year neither Mammoth nor their agent Advoda submitted a proposal. So technically they are not in the running except that Marmot reserves the right to continue using Mammoth services as long as it is in our best interests.

Mammoth did respond to a request for better pricing at 2 problem sites, Fraser Valley and Hot Sulphur Springs. That cost reduction is reflected in the Total MRC for Mammoth, etc. However Mammoth made no proposal to increase bandwidth with fiber or other creative solutions for problem sites in the mountains.

#4 Affiniti

Affiniti bid a complete solution covering all 30 sites plus the hub at Marmot, but their price is out of the park. Presumably this price would pay for building fiber to many remote sites where Marmot is continually frustrated with rural telecom options. Fiber, and in some cases microwave, at 10Mbps to all Marmot sites sounds terrific, but the cost is out of reach.

#3 Cogent etc.

Cogent proposed service for 12 sites. Their price tiers of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 300, and 500Mbps would allow flexibility in affording only as much bandwidth as each site might need, but overall prices are still in the "unaffordable" group.

#2 Charter etc.

Charter proposed fiber WAN service for 6 of 8 sites in the Mesa County Public Library District. At \$460/mo for 50Mbps service this is an attractive option. Marmot has had some success with cable companies to support general internet use by library patrons, but we often have problems with cable and specific protocols used by the primary library application used by library staff. Although prices are comparable between a total solution consisting of Charter cable at 6 Mesa County sites, and existing service at the other 24 Marmot sites, our lack of confidence in the technical side of cable puts Charter in the #2 position.

#1 Cedar

Tech Advisors is a consulting firm representing Cedar Networks. A lot of care was taken in this proposal to make cost-effective use of fiber, where available, as well as older technologies at good prices. Marmot is already working with Cedar to implement fiber at 7 sites. This proposal includes:

- Fiber (100M-1Gbps) for MCPLD Central, Pitkin County, and Avon at \$600/mo
- Fiber (100M-1Gbps) for 6 Garfield County sites at an average price of \$223/mo
- Ethernet over copper (7M/7M) for 9 sites @ \$535
- ADSL, T1, cable, etc. for the remaining 12 sites at competitive prices

The jury is still out on Cedar support, maintenance, and accounting requirements stated in the RFP, but it seems clear that a gradual migration to some or all of the solution proposed by Tech Advisors is in Marmot's best interests.

One highly desirable factor is that a migration to Cedar seems least disruptive—each site can be migrated taking steps already proven to be manageable in the first three migrations from Mammoth to Cedar at Rifle, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs.