

Schools debate engine analyzer purchase

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Sales representatives of a company whose bid was not recommended requested a school purchase be re-bid because they didn't understand the specifications.

The representatives from Sun Electric Co. — one of three companies bidding on the purchase of engine analyzers for three Farmington high schools — appeared at the Jan.

13 school board meeting to make a final pitch before the school board.

After several minutes of product information, sales representative Dan Gastineau said his company bid several thousand dollars higher because he misunderstood the specifications requests.

He said the term "diagnostic testing" used in the bid specification was "vague."

The project was bid out three times before being brought to the

school board with a recommendation, according to deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan. Board president Helen Prutow said she could understand why the purchase process took so long.

BEAR AUTOMOTIVE of Brighton, which also had representatives at the meeting, was awarded the \$48,888 bid for the three analyzers, which will be placed in the automotive shop areas of the district's three high schools.

The third vendor was Allen Test Products, which did not have representatives speaking at the meeting.

"The bottom line is that Bear meets the specs... and the spirit of the specs," Flanagan said. "This is already significantly over budget as it is. The biggest issue is that we maintain the integrity of the bidding process."

Trustee Susan Rennels urged the board to "adopt the recommendation that has been made... I think they've done some very extensive research."

"I appreciate them (sales representatives) coming here tonight, but I will go with Earl (Baumunk) and our instructors recommendation."

Earl Baumunk, director of vocational and career education for Farmington Public Schools, made the recommendation after conferring with high school vocational in-

structors and testing each model of analyzer.

Teachers said the Bear model was the only one with total expansion capabilities, allowing the district to add specialized software as it becomes available. Bear representatives said their software was made to specifications from automotive manufacturers.

Baumunk and his committee toured local repair facilities and even considered purchasing one model from each vendor as an option. "We spent a lot of time looking at the three brands," one teacher added.

RECOMMENDATION TO purchase the engine analyzers was made after a 1980 advisory committee recommended the district upgrade such equipment at the high schools. The schools' current equip-

ment will not interface with the computerized equipment in today's cars, Baumunk added.

"We had the chance to use all three machines," another teacher said. "It was the Bear they (the students) understood... they caught on quicker. The Sun only gives numbers — the Bear can give graphs and is easier for interpreting and learning."

In another purchase, the school board approved \$12,500 for sound equipment at the Farmington High School auditorium. Audio Visual Specifications was awarded the bid over low bidder Sound Engineering at \$11,069.

The low bidder would not guarantee installation of the equipment at this price and offered a second bid of \$15,065 for guarantee of the equipment, according to administrative assistant Beverly Hausman.

Soviet Jews tell story

U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, co-chaired, with other senior members of Congress, the Biennial Congressional Briefing by the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

Key participants in the briefing were UCSJ president Pamela Cohen, UCSJ legal counsel Stuart Elzenstat and Soviet human rights activist Yuri Orlov.

During the briefing, Yuri Orlov and UCSJ leaders briefed members of Congress and their staffs on the worsening conditions confronting Soviet Jews and provided information about recent changes in Soviet policy that have made the emigration process more difficult.

"The presence in America of those who escaped Russia is a victory for freedom. While they languished for many years as a prisoner of the Soviet system, their spirit was free and strong in its commitment to basic justice for human beings," said Broomfield, whose district includes the Farmington area.

"Through the efforts of such fine organizations as the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, the whole world learned of the violations of Anatoly Sharansky's and others' human rights. Through the efforts of many dedicated people, and their unparalleled courage, their freedom was won."

"While we can rejoice in their freedom, there are thousands of other cases of repression of Soviet Jews who have asked for nothing more than their basic freedoms and human dignity. With blind disregard

for basic human decency, Soviet officials regularly violate the rights of thousands of prisoners of conscience, Helsinki monitors, religious believers and others," Broomfield said.

The Soviet state's machines for repression remain well-oiled and active. "Only the efforts of courageous people such as Mr. Sharansky stand against the Soviet state. We must all continue to speak out against Soviet repression and to sup-

port those inside and outside the Soviet Union who continue the fight against Soviet tyranny," Broomfield said.

"That is the stark reality of the USSR today," he added.

"Slack gimmicks with blue smoke and mirrors will not convince the world that the Soviets respect human rights and that emigration is now easier from that closed society. We all know better than that."

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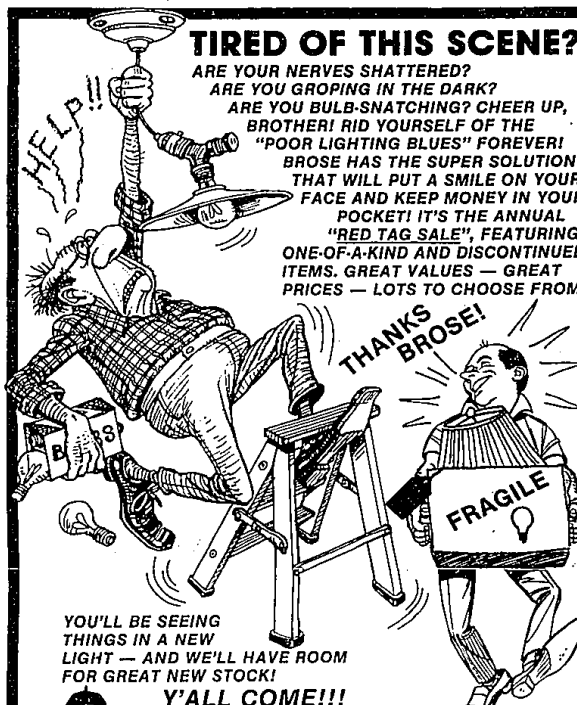
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