

Original low bid gets high sign from road body

Oakland County road commissioners last week decided a first come, first served policy in the area of low insurance bids was preferable to a controversial spotlight.

Commissioners, faced with triple insurance bids from two companies, awarded an insurance contract for \$539,335 to the Troy firm of Fred S. James Co. of Michigan, the original low bidder at the table, to cover workers compensation, fleet, general and auto insurance.

A dispute surfaced Dec. 22 when it appeared the three-man board might consider a second proposal from the firm of Huttenlocher, Kerns and Norvell which was submitted 11 days after the Dec. 8 deadline.

That bid was \$15,000 cheaper than James' first and only proposal.

ON THE FINAL day of bidding, both companies hand-delivered price quotes on the OCRC's insurance package. The James' quote was \$539,335. The Waterford-based Huttenlocher firm quoted a price of more than \$1 million.

Eleven days later, Huttenlocher re-submitted a bid that was half its original quote and \$15,424 below the James quote, according to road commission administrators.

Ralph Norvell, of Huttenlocher, said of the second proposal: "Recognizing our responsibility to the client (OCRC), and taxpayers of Oakland County, we continued our marketing efforts after the proposal date, resulting in a reduction of premium through lowering of the underlying liability limits and premiums by our companies."

"We both recognize our presentations to be proposals, not bids," he said.

Said Sam McGoun, president of the James Co., in protesting the late entry: "We have never experienced a situation like this. The only reaction that I have... is that these circumstances make our business look very unprofessional. What does this do to the image of the OCRC that we have portrayed to the companies we have worked with?"

OCRC CHAIRMAN Fred Houghton, whose Dec. 22 move to delay the contract consideration fueled the dispute, said it was "unfortunate" the commission didn't ask for sealed bids or quotes.

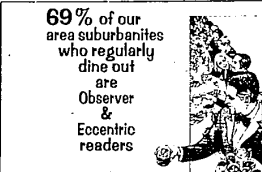
"Although road commission management was not inclined to go along with a practice that would 'whipsaw' vendors, it could not refuse to inform its board of all proposals."

John Grubbs, managing director of the OCRC, said, "Management and the board... recognizes the shortsightedness of such tactics, while a favorable rate may be obtained in the immediate case, the effect would be to discourage competitive quotes in the future and thus leave the road commission at the mercy of an uncontested vendor."

"TO HONOR the first bid would be the fairest thing to do," said Houghton, seconding a motion made by Commissioner John Gnau to approve the James' bid.

However, Houghton added, "it (the second Huttenlocher quote) is nearly one-third of what was paid (for OCRC insurance) in 1980. There's a tremendous difference in quotes from year to year, especially when you get into competition."

"We followed rules as set down by the board and staff," McGoun said, prior to being awarded the contract Dec. 30. "When information is made public and other quotes are submitted (after the deadline), it doesn't seem proper or fair to me."



Redwood & Ross

SEMI-ANNUAL CLEARANCE

sale

SUITS. \$159. to \$219.

At our semi-annual sale, all of our fall/winter weights have been reduced. Whether your needs are for business or dress—you'll find only the finest of fabrics in a wide range of solids, stripes, herringbones and glenplaids. Regularly \$195. to \$295. (Not all price ranges in all stores.)

SPORT COATS. \$84. to \$94.

Our entire collection of fall/winter coats are now yours at worthwhile savings. Includes wool herringbones, checks, windowpanes, harris tweeds and our fine wool-doeskin flannel blazers. Regularly \$110. to \$145.

HARRIS TWEEDS. We still have a good group of fine looking harris tweed sport jackets which can be worn for years without being dated. Regularly \$145. **\$124.**

Top Coats. \$159. to \$219.

Final clearance on all dress coats. Broken lots, but very worthwhile savings if we have your size. Regularly \$195. to \$275. Sale prices from \$159. to \$219. (Dress coats not available in all stores.)

Outerwear. \$78. to \$88.

Cold weather has just begun and we have reduced a variety of styles. Even includes all of our fine Mighty-Mac coats. Other parka and jacket ideas are included. Regularly \$110. to \$135.

OUR BEST SELLING DOWN-LINED PARKA 4 Garments IN 1

We sold-out during the Christmas rush but we've purchased a special quantity that enables us to offer this super-parka at an incredible value. Tan shell-Navy Liner. Formerly \$135 now only **\$98.**

Sweaters. \$18. to \$34.

After holiday selling we have accumulated broken lots of many of our best-selling styles. Includes a variety of v-neck and crew-neck pullovers, cardigans and cable ideas. Regularly to \$55.

Dress Trousers. \$39. to \$49.

Final clearance on our entire stock of all wool worsted trousers which includes solids and plaids.

Casual Trousers. \$19.88

Our entire stock of \$29.50 casuals are now reduced to one super price of \$19.88. Includes twills, flannels and corduroys. (All stores except Birmingham.)

Dress Shirts

This special table consists of broken lots, which are excellent values if we have your size. Regularly to \$24.50.

\$16.88

Röbes

Special group.
1/2 price

Sport Shirts

You'll find a wide assortment of cotton flannels, wool blends, and even solids. Great looks for your casual time. Values to \$25.

\$14.88

Redwood & Ross for Women • Clearance Sale 20% - 40% OFF • Selected Fall/Winter Sportswear

in following stores: Champaign: Marker Place & Campus Store • Indianapolis: Downtown & Castleton • Kalamazoo: Maple Hill • Lansing: Meridian • South Bend: Scottsdale & University Park • Birmingham

Major Credit
Cards accepted

Redwood & Ross

241 Merrill Street - Birmingham

Clearance Sale
thru January