

Rural Court Technology, Phase IV

FY2004 Request: \$100,000
Reference No: 37746

AP/AL: Appropriation
Category: Law and Justice
Location: Statewide
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2003 - 06/30/2008

Project Type: Renewal and Replacement
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Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Alaska Court System is requesting \$420,000 for the fourth phase of a four-phase, multi-year project to replace courtroom audio recording and electronic sound systems statewide.

Funding:	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	Total
Gen Fund	\$100,000						\$100,000
Total:	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phased Project	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

Project Description/Justification:

The court system has utilized electronic recording of judicial proceedings since statehood. Tape recorders were used to make an audio recording of all trials and hearings. A recording is the only record of the proceeding and is an official, permanent record of the court. The audiotape recordings are used to produce over 110,000 pages of transcripts each year. Digital electronic recording is substantially less costly than using court reporters and stenographic machines. Electronic recording is the foundation of a process that involves all levels of the court system.

Courtroom sound systems are comprised of a recording device, sound reinforcement equipment, microphones, a telephone interface, a public address system and cabling. Typically, separate microphones and recording channels are provided for the judge, the jury, the witness and the attorneys. The sound reinforcement system amplifies and equalizes the microphone audio input and also serves as a public address system. Speakers are mounted in the courtroom to allow the jury and the public to hear testimony and public conversations. Interface equipment allows a telephone to be connected to the courtroom recording system. Telephonic testimony is frequently used in the courts to reduce costs.

The recorders and sound reinforcement equipment that require replacement were manufactured by GYYR Court Recording Division. GYYR ceased business in 1992 and the machines are no longer manufactured or supported. Upon the closure of GYYR, the court system purchased as much of the company's inventory as it could. The court system has also searched nationwide for GYYR replacement parts and technical support. Parts and service are not available. Though the court system's technical staff is fully trained on repairing the machines, the lack of replacement parts makes maintaining the equipment very difficult. The stock of parts is exhausted and machines have to be cannibalized to maintain the remaining recorders. Furthermore, the equipment is well beyond its expected useful life of 10 years and experiences higher failure rates as time passes.

During phase three of this project, the court selected and installed digital recording systems using PCs and compact disks as the media. For data integrity, these systems use multiple disk drives for data storage to prevent the loss of the audio

record due to disk drive failure. For longer-term storage, the audio record is automatically transferred to other storage devices, such as compact disk or digital audiotape. These latter devices offer higher density storage; allowing between 10 and 65 hours of recording on each disk or tape. The individual courtroom computers are networked in a standard client/server configuration. These systems also offer the possibility of interfacing with the court system's computerized case management system. Log notes or annotations are incorporated into the digital record, allowing instantaneous location and playback of the recorded material.

The four phases of this project are:

Phase 1: Approved FY 97 capital project, funded for \$125,000. Period 7/1/96 – 12/31/97. Hired consultant to evaluate current recording system and evaluate courtroom design for improving acoustics in new courthouses and remodeled facilities. Acquired additional analog recording devices for use as spares.

Phase 2: Approved FY 98 capital project for \$1,375,000. Period 7/1/97 – 6/30/98. Upgraded peripheral courtroom electronics statewide to improve the quality of the current recording systems. These peripherals can be utilized with any recording technology. Acquired test digital audio recording systems from current vendors to evaluate operation in actual courtroom environments. Acquired infrared-based hearing assistance devices to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Replaced tape duplication equipment statewide.

Phase 3: Approved FY 99 project for \$1,958,700. Period 7/1/98 through 6/30/00. Replaced audio recording systems in six large court locations; Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan and Palmer. Through a competitive procurement, acquired digital audio recording systems for all courtrooms in the court system's six highest case-volume courts. The cost savings that were realized in Phases 2 and 3 allowed the court to install additional systems in Sitka, Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome, Homer, Kodiak, Dillingham, Valdez, Bethel, the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. Phases 1 to 3 targeted the modernization of the largest courts with new sound systems and digital recording equipment. Phase 4 will target the remaining rural courts.

Phase 4: FY 04 Capital project request for \$420,000. Period 7/1/03 through 6/30/04. Replace audio recording systems in the remaining 28 rural courts. These systems will be selected based on the size of the court and the associated recording activity.