

QBS-Why it's Still Important

By Greg Sekera, PE

Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) is one of our industry's most important considerations. Yet while QBS has repeatedly shown to improve a project's overall success, it still experiences an uphill battle when it comes to the team selection process. Yes, QBS allows clients to get that for which they have paid. Yes, the consultants who are contracted based upon QBS standards are providing services based upon need-not what they can "skip to make the budget work." And yes, historical documentation supports the fact that cost overruns and additional services addendums are significantly reduced when contracts are based upon a "real" scope of work and provision of services that are required to do the job correctly. So why is fee-based selection still the preference of many clients in both the public and private sector?

QBS Colorado promotes the selection of design professionals based on qualifications. The QBS committee promotes its mission through publications, distribution of literature, presentations to public agencies and attendance at conferences.

The committee has been very active recently making presentations to municipalities and state agencies as well as responding to requests for proposals that include price as a selection criteria. There are many school districts, municipalities and public agencies that currently use QBS. The number of agencies that use cost as the main criteria for selecting design consultants, however, is surprising.

All federal and state funded projects, by law, must use the qualifications based selection process for choosing professional design consultants. Major trade organizations such as ACEC, ASCE, APWA, NSPE and ASCE are proponents of QBS.

QBS Colorado meets with agencies, provides information regarding the QBS process and offers to make a PowerPoint presentation to the staff.

Design Consultants must be promoting QBS. For more information about QBS Colorado, please visit www.acec-co.org/qbs.

And the Winner is...

Congratulations to Aurora Water, 2007 QBS National Merit Award winner and QBS Colorado's 2007 State Award winner! "Aurora Water closely follows QBS guidelines and the agency currently has over one billion dollars of capital projects under construction or planned over the next five years," says Larry Catalano, PE, Capital Projects Manager. "The current Capital Improvements Program is comprised of over 200 projects. Aurora Water has selected over 19 engineering consultants over the past 3 years for design and construction related professional services for water, wastewater and storm water projects. They understand the value gained from selecting consultants based on qualifications and experience, rather than strictly on price.

In addition, Aurora Water has implemented professional Master Engineering Service Agreements (MESA) for a pool of pre-qualified engineering consultants selected within 18 technical disciplines to provide engineering services for capital improvement projects on a test order basis for 3 years. By establishing a MESA, Aurora Water is able to procure

professional engineering services in the most expedient and equitable manner possible."



The Awards were presented at the ACEC September General Meeting. L-R: Brien Gidlow, PE, ACEC President; R.B. Simmons, Aurora Water; Larry Catalano, Aurora Water; Greg Sekera QBS Chairman.

QBS Colorado Hosts Forum

This past March, QBS Colorado hosted its first forum titled "QBS-What is the Value?" Our objective was to discuss in an open forum, Qualifications Based Selection, including its value to the project, barriers to successful processes and implementation strategies. Guest speakers were Amy L. Spatz, AIA, Manager of Design and Construction for Aurora Public Schools and David J. Bufalo, PE, recently retired Director of the Design and Construction Management Division of Denver's Department of Public Works.

Brian Calhoun, AIA, 2007 QBS Colorado chair and Bill Barreire, PE, QBS Colorado board member acted as moderators. QBS Colorado's PowerPoint presentation was shown followed by a very informative panel discussion and Q & A session. Over 40 attendees from a number of public agencies, school districts, ACEC and AIA members came away with a better understanding of the value provided by the Qualifications Based Selection Process.

Georgia DOT Named 2007 QBS Grand Award Winner

The Georgia Department of Transportation has been named winner of the 2007 National Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) Grand Award, in judging by ACEC and the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE).

In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Administration and Aurora (Colorado) Water were selected 2007 QBS Merit Award winners.

The QBS Awards Program honors those that effectively protect and promote QBS methods to procure professional design services at state and local levels.

This is the 10th year ACEC has partnered with NSPE in the QBS Awards Program.

"The Georgia Department of Transportation is to be commended for their dedication to selecting design professionals on the basis of their qualifications," said John Dugan, one of ACEC's judges for this year's competition. "All of this year's award winners are excellent examples that highlight the success of QBS."

Reprinted from ACEC's Last Word

QBS Study

Continued state and federal challenges to Qualifications Based Selection make it imperative that members strongly support an ongoing ACEC-commissioned university research initiative. Researchers are seeking data on as many projects as possible, including life-cycle costs, client satisfaction, schedule and sustainability.

All QBS proponents are encouraged to submit projects online at www.qbsstudy.com. The project submittal process only takes a few minutes and all submittals will be kept confidential. University of Colorado Professor, Paul Chinowsky, is leading the research effort, please contact him at paul.chinowsky@colorado.edu with questions.

QBS Colorado Presentations

In addition, to our March Forum our Directors have made presentations to the following agencies and associations: International Facility Management Association; Department of Local Affairs; Structural Engineers Association of Colorado;

American Society of Civil Engineers; American Public Works Association; Colorado Springs Utilities; City of Pueblo; ACEC North Chapter; ACEC South Chapter and the West Chapter of AIA.

RFP Responses

When price-based Solicitations for Professional Design Services are brought to the attention of the QBS Colorado Board, we make immediate contact with the agency. A letter explaining the benefits of following QBS procedures along with one of our brochures is mailed; a follow-up phone call is later placed.

This year we have responded to RFP's issued from the following agencies: City of Walsenberg; City of Evans; Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; Brighton School District; City of Montrose; Arapahoe County; Town of Milliken; and Adams County.

SEAC Joins the QBS Board

The Structural Engineers Association of Colorado (SEAC) has voted to join the QBS Colorado Board of Directors. It is the opinion of the SEAC that following the QBS process will result not only in

better quality of service and value for the structural engineer's client, but also in an overall betterment of the profession. We welcome the members of the Structural Engineers Association of Colorado.

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For more information on QBS, visit:
www.acec-co.org/qbs