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RECENT PROCUREMENT WEBSITE FOR THE WATER AND WASTEWATER INDUSTRIES

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Much of the world's water systems are inadequate or crumbling from age. Around the world, billions are spent each year to build or repair water and wastewater systems. Yet, there has been no place where utilities could announce their contract opportunities and be assured that interested vendors could find them. Until now.

H2bid.com is a recently-launched international procurement website for the water and wastewater industries. H2bid.com is a global procurement portal exclusively dedicated to the water and wastewater industries. The site is for water and wastewater utilities and their vendors. H2bid allows utilities to post contract opportunities, and allows vendors to search and download the contract opportunities. Posting and searching is free, but there is a small fee (\$7.95) to download the full details of a contract opportunity. Contract opportunities can be searched by categories (which are further divided into subcategories): Country, UNSPSC Code (United Nations Standard Products and Services Code), Document ID, or Keyword. Here are a few recent contract opportunities posted on H2bid:

- a water system construction project
- pump station upgrade
- a bid seeking cooling water chemicals
- repair of an elevated water tank
- construction of a new wastewater treatment plant
- various types of consulting services contracts

Users can find all versions of contract opportunities from around the world, including requests for bids, requests for quotes, requests for tenders, and requests for information. Users can even select a contract opportunity and save it in a personal bid folder for later review. Users can sign up for free email alerts where you are notified by email when a contract opportunity is posted in one of your pre-selected categories. Buyers can also use H2bid's extensive database of contract opportunities to get ideas on how to write their own contract opportunities.

H2bid.com is owned by H2bid, LLC. The idea for the website originated with Glenn Oliver. Oliver previously served as one of the seven members of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Board of Commissioners, which oversees water and wastewater services for 8 Michigan counties, as well as the City of Detroit. “In that role I realized that there were billions of dollars being spent in the industry, but the utilities were often not sure that they were getting the most competitive bid,” Oliver said. “There was no central place where utilities and vendors could find each other. If a water or wastewater utility announces a multi-million dollar contract opportunity, anyone in the world should be able to find and bid on it, particularly because public dollars are being spent.”

Most water utilities are publicly owned and have a duty to use a public bidding process for awarding contracts. “Without H2bid it is impossible for the world’s vendors and utilities to find each other,” said Oliver. “Currently, the vendors that can provide the best product or service for the lowest price have no way of knowing which of the thousands of utilities are in need of what they sell. Conversely, the utilities frequently are limited to vendors on their “vendor list” when they send out notices. Even the utilities that have websites cannot compete with H2bid’s ability to aggregate the purchasing information in one location for the entire industry (utilities and vendors) worldwide. We hope to create true competition, greater transparency, and lower prices in the water and wastewater industries.”

Any utility (or company) can post a water or wastewater contract opportunity on H2bid for free. Posting only takes a couple of minutes. When posted, the contract opportunity becomes immediately available on the Internet. H2bid is a website where everyone wins, including the ratepayers who can be assured that the various multimillion-dollar projects have been exposed to the world to produce the best bid (or tender). With utilities spending billions for years to come, this could translate into real money that can reduce the need for the constant and exorbitant rate increases that are becoming common throughout water and wastewater systems. This is especially important for such projects as desalination plants where the cost is enormous and even small savings can free up millions for other important projects.

According to Oliver, H2bid is capable of hosting bids from every continent, country, province, state, county, city, town, or village. There are no cost barriers, because all utilities can announce their contract opportunities at no cost to the entire world of water and wastewater vendors and suppliers.

In the first 5 months, the site had 65,000 visitors from 32 countries. H2bid’s popularity has allowed it to rise to the top 5 search results in Google, Yahoo, and MSN for the keywords water bids and wastewater bids.

The site has a monthly e-newsletter and companion blog: <http://www.h2bid.com/wordpress/>. The H2bid blog contains articles discussing the world’s water issues and monthly profiles of leaders in the water industry.

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Users can also receive daily RSS feeds to their webpage or email mailbox about new postings. H2bid is developing partnerships with water utilities in developing countries. Through the partnerships, a portion of the proceeds from bids placed on H2bid will be donated to fund projects providing safe drinking water to rural communities.

H2bid enables water and wastewater utilities and their potential suppliers to find each other at a rate of speed that has never existed. In doing so, it enables utilities to fulfill their fiduciary obligation of getting the best product or service for the best price. Conversely, vendors now have a one-stop-shop to access water and wastewater contract opportunities all over the world.

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