Internet Firm Rolls Out Logistics Solution At Two California School Districts

MARINA DEL REY, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 2, 2000--The task of deploying goods and services from a central warehouse or maintenance facility to hundreds of classrooms and offices spread over a large area just became a lot easier for two California school districts. Both the Manhattan Beach Unified School District and the Culver City Unified School District have replaced their carbon paper form system of supply and maintenance ordering with an Internet-based solution. The ``OPRA'' system (Order Processing and Requisition Accelerator) was developed by PPS Systems Inc. of Marina del Rey and has been quietly tested at the Manhattan Beach District over the past 18 months.

Under the old system, supply and maintenance requestors were required to type lengthy multiple carbon order forms, have them pouched to the appropriate resource center and then wait days for action to be taken, often not knowing if the request was ever received.

Using OPRA, ordering is a simple point and click process. The order receipt and status are immediately transmitted back to the requestor, eliminating bottlenecks, improving communications and greatly improving the district's efficiency and its ability to deliver goods and services where they are most needed -- the classroom.

OPRA is estimated to save a staggering 5,239 man-hours in turnaround/processing time and more than $21,400 in transaction costs per 1,000 orders. Added to these benefits are real-time inventory, resource tracking and timely reports that could result in reimbursements from state and federal funds. According to PPS spokesman Warren Wagner, the savings do not include money saved by canceling the subscription to their current systems.
For the first time, district sites know how they are performing within their allocated budgets in real time without having to wait for monthly reports.

``I love OPRA,'' said Pacific School secretary Pam Paradissis. ``I was skeptical at first but once we got going, it makes ordering a snap and the orders are filled much quicker. At last I know what's happening with my orders and how much our school has spent right up to the second. I can't imagine going back to the old system; I don't even think my old typewriter works anyway.'' Wagner points out that OPRA utilizes the Internet infrastructure that is already in place or scheduled to be in place at most districts. ``If an end-user has ever used a browser they can master OPRA in about 5 minutes -- this eliminates costly training and installation charges inherent in non-Internet applications. Niche applications that are easy to use, easy to deploy and tailored to solve particular problems represent the second wave of the Internet revolution taking place throughout the connected world,'' said Wagner.

PPS is currently installing its OPRA system in several California school districts and has versions targeted toward public works departments, local governments and corporate users. Interested parties may contact PPS at 800/545-4888.