

PRESS RELEASE – August 26, 2002

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PPS COMPLETES TECHNOLOGY REVIEW AND “AS-BUILT” DOCUMENTATION FOR LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST COLLEGE

Marina del Rey CA - Los Angeles Southwest Community College (LASC), part of the nation's largest community college district, was delivered a comprehensive review of its IT department along with crucial documents and drawings that reveal the architecture of their current computer network. The engineering work was done by Marina del Rey based Package Products & Services, Inc (PPS), a technology company that specializes in helping schools, municipalities and private companies better understand and manage their Information Technology resources.

Bracing for growth and after years of building a computer network organically, LASC management realized that formal documentation of the IT architecture was imperative. Supporting such complicated systems requires that proper documentation be available and not simply stored within the mind of a technology staff member for both support and management functions. “If the staff member who holds this knowledge is hit by a truck tomorrow, in many cases, the secrets of the network go with him/her. This leaves management in a very vulnerable, dangerous and potentially costly situation.” said Warren Wagner of PPS.

As accidents may happen with a wayward truck, a more compelling reason to have this type of examination done is that maintaining network documentation is crucial to the methodology of troubleshooting, identifying network single-point-of-failure vulnerabilities and capacity planning. Peter Williamson chief engineer on the project notes: “We work as partners with the existing IT team and oftentimes find and correct points of vulnerability and network bottlenecks during the discovery and documentation process itself. We also deliver electronic VISIO files of the drawings and other files so that changes can easily be made to the documentation by the IT department.” Williamson also noted that it is also important that this document be in joint custody of both the technology staff and senior administrative management of the college being a “trusted user” group.

Besides physical examination of equipment racks and wiring, PPS uses numerous software tools to evaluate network and IT performance. One of the tools involves the use of PPS's proprietary OPRA™ software which reports statistics as to the responsiveness of the IT department and is extremely helpful in re-aligning IT resources and spotting problem areas. Says Wagner, “Beyond the engineering documentation we'll use the tools and methods which are best suited to the goals of management. This could include the use of OPRA facilitating focus groups, user surveys, observation and other methods. The

end result is that both IT and management have both the big picture which can be drilled down to the most minuet detail.”

The best news is that the cost of such a through examination will not break the bank. Seimans, Seibold, IBM and others do this sort of work but normally do not provide VISIO files and other documentation that can be updated by the clients own IT staff and charge about 200% more. Further, PPS’s depth of understanding of school districts is augmented by Wagner himself who since 1997 has served on the State of California’s “Computer Education Advisory Panel” which has directed educational technology related laws within the state. “We’re very proud of our deliverables to LASC. Management now can take a deep breath of relief and IT now has the tools it needs to better fulfill their mission. Everyone comes out a winner.”

PPS Systems, Inc. is a privately held company with headquarters in Marina del Rey, California. PPS provides and hosts its OPRA software to several school districts throughout the region and currently supports several districts with over 300,000 students, thousands of transactions and thousands of parents on a daily basis through one or more of their browser based software modules.

The service that is described above relates to a natural expansion of the utilization of the company’s expertise and services available. Interested parties may contact PPS at 800-545-4888 or email at sales@opras.net.

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