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**Vendors miffed over AT&T contract reboot**

Posted 11/25/2009 3:42 AM EST



BY JEFF SCHWEERS

Looking to save close to \$1.2 million over the next few years on its telecommunications contract, the Brevard County Commission renegotiated the rate structure with its existing provider AT&T and extended its contract for another three years with options to renew after the end of the contract.

But the 3-2 decision by the board last week to extend its contract has drawn criticism from other telecommunications providers, who wanted a chance to bid on the contract.

And it's turning into a campaign issue for the 2010 District 4 County Commission race.

Leading the charge against the county is local Tea Party leader Matt Nye, a salesman for Shoretel who was lobbying for his company to get the contract and also a candidate for the same county commission seat held by the board's current chairwoman, Mary Bolin.

Bolin supported the decision to extend AT&T's contract. The alternative would have been to keep the current rate structure in place while the county spent the next 18 months going out to bid on the contract, which handles the county's network and phone circuits, network switches and Private Branch Exchanges.

That network includes the libraries, Space Coast Government Television, the sheriff, property appraiser, tax collector, supervisor of elections and the court system.

The renegotiated contract also provides the following benefits, according to Jon Sellers, the county's IT director:

- It adds a second 45 Mb connection to the existing 10 Mb connection which is already at capacity 24/7.
- It will increase the performance of Fire Rescue's network by a factor of 10 at 29 stations.
- It gives the county three full-time AT&T employees on site to handle network and telephone system installations and updates.
- Nye said the deal is a waste of taxpayer money and the contract should have gone out to bid to give the county a chance to see whether any providers could do more for less. That would presumably include the

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company for which Nye works.

He also said the current system is obsolete. Bolin said his comment was incorrect, that the Department of Defense uses the same system, as do 93 percent of top manufacturing companies.

Bolin argues that the decision was a prudent and responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Click [here](#) to see the county commission agenda item.

What do you think?

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**petec1** wrote:

Mr. nye, call a tea-party for the next council meeting and protest. Of course you have no conflict of interest now, do you?

11/25/2009 11:20 AM EST

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**flordaman** wrote:

Matt Nye did not mention that he was a salesman for the company he was making the pitch for in his recent Letter to the Editor deriding Nelson and Bolin for choosing what turns out to be a competitor. That is inexcusable.

11/25/2009 12:03 PM EST

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**kincharo** wrote:

Mr Lye you are a scoundrel for hiding the facts; good job Mary Bolin. My vote is with you.

11/25/2009 12:13 PM EST

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**Floridadude** wrote:

Good ol boy politics...Never ends.....

11/25/2009 12:25 PM EST

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**papa123** wrote:

Maybe the bidding process should start 18 month's before the contract becomes due!...ya think? papa123 says

11/25/2009 12:44 PM EST

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**tansnout** wrote:

Man! I need to become a County Commissioner! Free range to do what ever "I" thinks best! Sweet!

11/25/2009 1:05 PM EST

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**Anarchy** wrote:

It appears to me, that 3 out of the 5 commissioners, accepted their kickbacks, in time for Christmas shopping. I grew up thinking all government contracts were subject to bids, until Dick Cheney. After all, we put men on the moon with materials and equipment, built by the lowest bidder, whats changed, besides corrupt politicians?

11/25/2009 1:24 PM EST

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**TropStorm** wrote:

Matt Nye needs to concentrate on paying his back taxes (ORB 5846 Page 5602) before he can complain on how tax dollars are spent.

11/25/2009 3:15 PM EST

[Recommend \(3\)](#) [Report Abuse](#) [Permalink](#)



**syscore** wrote:

"After all, we put men on the moon with materials and equipment, built by the lowest bidder"

Ummm, actually, no. Most of that stuff only had one possible source capable of making it.

But telecommunications, that is pretty ubiquitous. Though I think the Mr Lye moniker is appropriate.

11/25/2009 3:17 PM EST

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**Roadwatch** wrote:

Just send the County Commission down to the 7-11 and buy a big bag of Majic Jacks!

Although no fan of AT&T, you can't just trash the infrastructure already in place and award something like this to the lowest bidder. EMS, PD's and other communications-dependant departments have tried that in the past, and wound up ripping the junk out. You usually wind up with consumer-grade crud that is so "buggy" and cheap that it's useless. I'm sure "Shoretel" or Ray's Rockin' Radios could blow enough sunshine up their butts to convince them that tin cans and string really ARE better AND cheaper, but who 'ya gonna call when the string network breaks?

11/25/2009 4:42 PM EST

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