



**Council  
Communication**  
Office of the City Manager

**Date**

May 19, 2008

**Agenda Item No.** 39

**Roll Call No.** ~~08-~~

**Communication No.** 08-282

**Submitted by:** Richard A. Clark, City Manager

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Approving Professional Services Contract with ETC Institute, Elaine Tatham, President, 725 W. Frontier Circle Olathe, KS, for development and implementation of the 2008 Resident Satisfaction Survey and the 2008 Survey of Businesses, not to exceed \$33,250.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Recommend approval of a professional services contract for the development and implementation of the *DirectionFinder*© resident satisfaction survey with ETC Institute (ETC) and to authorize the City Manager to sign the agreement. The survey instrument will be developed jointly by staff and ETC. A copy of the draft surveys are available for review at the City Clerk's Office.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Amount: Not to exceed \$33,250 (\$21,630 for the *DirectionFinder*© survey and \$11,260 for the business survey)

Funding Source: Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Operating Budget, City Wide Training and Benchmarking Fund, SP720, HRS980100, page 189.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

If this action is approved, ETC will again administer its *DirectionFinder* survey via mail and phone to a random sample of Des Moines residents. Also, for the first time, ETC will administer a business survey to businesses located in the City. The City will be guaranteed results from 800 completed resident surveys and 400 completed business surveys.

The City first began using the services of ETC in 2004. ETC was selected for two principal reasons: first, the results from ETC can be benchmarked against results from communities across the nation. Second, the City experienced significant savings by utilizing the basic ETC *DirectionFinder* survey as opposed to its previous vendors. Specifically, in 2001, the City Council approved a contract with Iowa State University for a survey conducted in 2002. The Iowa State survey cost the City approximately \$30,000.

Under prior contracts, ETC included the basic services of tabular data, benchmarking information, and importance-satisfaction (I-S) analysis in the resident surveys. ETC will include these services in the 2008 resident survey as well. Furthermore, as with the 2007 resident survey, ETC will provide a cross tabulation of survey results so that the information from each question can be examined by up to four subgroups, such as age, ethnicity, gender, or income level.

Like last year's survey, the 2008 resident survey will use a sample size of 800 residents. This sample size will allow data to be sub-grouped and analyzed by city ward. The results at the ward-level will be statistically significant with a precision of at least +/- 6.5% at the 95% level of confidence. Overall, the survey results will be statistically significant with a precision of at least +/- 3.5% at the 95% level of confidence.

The 2007 resident survey asked Des Moines residents to share their degree of satisfaction with major city services related to the City's new goal statements. Of the twelve categories, residents were most satisfied with the quality of community assets (parks, bridges, etc.), public safety, and life-long learning opportunities. Residents were least satisfied with the overall fairness of the City's taxes and fees, the quality of jobs and the economy, and neighborhood commercial and retail districts. These survey results were useful in that they guided staff as they developed implementation strategies for programs that would address the new goals. The 2008 resident survey will offer the same questions regarding major City services related to the City's goal statements, and thus, staff will have time-series data on resident satisfaction with progress toward the goal statements. The data can be used in the annual performance report as well as in the more general reporting of City performance.

In regards to the 2008 business survey, staff would like to offer local businesses the same opportunity to share their opinions of City services as is afforded to residents. Des Moines businesses pay a significant portion of the property taxes used to fund City programs. The value of commercial property in Des Moines is 24% of the total value of property in the community, but it is 47% of the value of property that is taxable given Iowa's property tax system. As the business survey will use a sample size of 400 businesses, survey results will be statistically significant with a precision of at least +/- 5% at the 95% level of confidence.

As in the past, ETC Institute will formally present the results of the survey to City Council during a workshop, tentatively planned for the last week in July 2008.

#### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: April 23, 2007

Roll Call Number: 07-760

Action: [Professional](#) Services Contract with ETC Institute for the development and implementation of the 2007 Resident Satisfaction Survey, \$21,105. ([Council Communication No. 07-214](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: April 10, 2006

Roll Call Number: 06-665

Action: [Professional](#) Services Contract with ETC Institute, (Olathe, KS), for development and implementation of the 2006 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, not to exceed \$10,500. ([Council Communication No. 06-181](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 6-1.

Date: April 11, 2005

Roll Call Number: 05-875

Action: Professional Services Contract with ETC Institute, (Elaine Tatham, President, Olathe, KS) for development and implementation of Citizen Satisfaction Survey. ([Council Communication No. 05-208](#)) Moved by Hensley to approve. Motion Carried 6-1.

**BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

The survey will be conducted throughout the months of May and June, and the findings will be reported to Council during the last week of July (tentative).

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