

SCC board to decide on renovation project

BY AUDREY WONG
DAILY REPUBLIC

ROCKVILLE — Solano Community College Board members will decide tonight if they want to award a \$3 million contract under a pilot project for an agreement between labor unions and the college.

Two companies bid to renovate the science, business and mathematics and engineering buildings. College staff are recommending the project be awarded to Alten Construction of Richmond. SCC's engineers estimated construction costs would be \$3.2 million and Alten offered to do the job for \$3.07 million.

The building renovations will test the performance of SCC's project labor agreement

At a glance

Who: Solano Community College board members

What: Vote to award contract for building renovations

When: 7 p.m. today

Where: 4000 Suisun Valley Road, Administration Building Room 626

Info: 864-7000

with local trade unions that the board approved in 2003. Project labor agreements are pre-hiring agreements that spell out the terms and conditions of a construction project. They can specify building schedules, scope of work, where workers

come from and other details.

Companies that get contracts under project labor agreements must pay the state's recommended wage, said Lou Franchimon of the Napa Solano Building and Construction Trades Council.

When the renovation is complete, college staff will evaluate whether bids under the agreement came in on time and budget. If the bidding process is satisfactory, then the college will decide whether to add more Measure G college bond projects to the agreement, said Ray Ogden of SCC's maintenance and operations.

The project labor agreement covers the construction of satellite campuses in Vacaville and Vallejo and a new student services building at the Rockville

campus, Ogden said.

But the project labor agreement discourages non-union companies from bidding and drives competition down, said Kevin Dayton, state government affairs director of the Associated Builders and Contractors of California.

Having two companies pitch bids for a \$3 million job proves the agreement drove companies away, he said. If there were more bidders, then the college could have received a lower price, he added.

"I expect six, seven or eight (bids)," Dayton said. "That's typical in the Bay Area."

Dayton will ask the district tonight to re-bid the project without the agreement.

A number of contractors told the board they opposed the

agreement. Michael Flynn of Mike Flynn Painting Old and New said the project labor agreement dissuaded him from bidding.

The number of bids for a project always varies, SCC board member Phil McCaffrey said. The college sent items to 54 contractors and there were 24 interested parties. Then 16 company representatives attended a job walk. In the end the number whittled down to two.

"The lowest bidder came under price by several hundred dollars," McCaffrey said. "Isn't that the responsible thing?"

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