The State of Mississippi seeks to acquire 6,000 to 12,000 personal computers and related services to support Governor Musgrove's initiative of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every public elementary and secondary classroom in Mississippi by the end of 2002.

We would appreciate your taking a few moments and responding to this reference check via email. We are using email hoping you will be able to respond quickly and at your convenience, without phone interruptions to your otherwise busy schedules. We thank you in advance for your assistance and hope that we may be able to return the favor at a future date. If at all possible, we would appreciate a response ASAP, but no later than 5:00 PM, Friday, July 21, 2000.

Please BOLD your responses to the questions in Italics.

Reference Questionnaire - Project: Governor Musgrove's Initiative for a PC in every classroom
Date: 07/19/2000
Proposal Submitted By: **Howard Computers**
Reference: **MS State University**
Reference Contact Information:
Name: **Dr. Harry Cole**
Title: **Associate Professor of Civil Engineering,**
] **Mississippi State University**
Phone #: **662-325-7196**
E-mail address: **cole@civil.msstate.edu**

Please note – I will be out of the state from July 24 through August 4. Please feel free to contact me after August 4.

What were the dates of the Project?
Proposed Start:
Proposed End:
Actual Start:
Actual End:

What was the scope of the project?

I purchased approximately 12 PC's for use in our department's microcomputer laboratory, and for use by faculty and staff.

What hardware was acquired from this Vendor for this project?

Computers only – monitors and other peripherals were purchased from another source.

If PC's were acquired:
a) What was the configuration of the system?

Pentium II and III's, with 8-10 GB hard drives and 64 or 128 MB memory, Windows 98 operating system

b) How many systems were acquired from this Vendor?

Approximately 12

What services were acquired from this Vendor for this project?

No services other than standard computer configuration

Project Cost Information:
Proposed cost?   *The proposed costs were very close to those on the ITS EPL (if not EPL costs, then the costs were lower than the EPL)*

Actual cost?
Note: If actual > proposed: What is the justification for the difference?

Was the project successfully completed on schedule?   Yes / No

Computers were delivered as promised by the vendor

If no, please justify the schedule slippage.
Was the project outcome used as the basis of additional work? If so, what?

Project Communication Information:
Did the contractor keep you informed about potential issues pertaining to the project? Yes / No

Yes – the vendor notified me of any deviations from EPL or proposed configuration. There were no surprises

On a scale of 1 to 10:   What is your overall satisfaction with the vendor?

10 - sales and service support were excellent

Would you hire this vendor again?

Yes

If not, why?

Please note other relevant comments.

One of Howard's strong points is that they use top-grade standard components. This makes the product easy to set up and service, and greatly simplifies resolving hardware and software compatibility issues. Other vendors tend to use proprietary components that are not available from other sources and are expensive to replace or upgrade.

I have visited the Howard plant, and was very impressed with their business model. Their assembly and quality controls are very good.   Technical support is qualified and readily accessible.

I have had over 20 years' experience in computer systems (both technical and management positions) in the University, civilian sector and the military. Based on this experience I feel comfortable in providing a very positive assessment of Howard Computers. I also am very pleased to see this type industry in the state.

Again thanks in advance for your assistance with this matter.

Cheryl Yelverton
Technology Consultant
Information Technology Services (ITS)