ASME Standards Technology, LLC

Request for Proposals

RFP-ASMEST-10-02

B31 #4 – Review of Safety Considerations for Natural Gas Pipeline Block Valve Spacing

Date Posted: June 3, 2009

Proposal Due Date: June 30, 2009

1. Summary

ASME Standards Technology, LLC is soliciting proposals for a review of safety considerations for natural gas pipeline block valve spacing.

This project resulted from ASME Pressure Technology Codes and Standards (PTCS) Standards Committee requests to identify, prioritize, and address technology gaps in PTCS Codes, Standards, and Guidelines. This project is one of several included for ASME FY2010 funding and is intended to establish and maintain the technical relevance of ASME codes and standards products. An overview of the annual ASME PTCS project selection process is provided at http://files.asme.org/STLLC/10192.pdf.

2. Scope of Work

a. Description

B31.8 Code requirements in Paragraph 846 establish block valve spacing requirements based on Location Class. These requirements date to the 1955 Edition and were the basis for maximum valve spacing restrictions in US pipeline regulations in 1968. A revision was made in the 2007 Edition of B31.8 to allow other valve spacing based on operations and maintenance needs, but the fixed spacing remains as a legacy prescriptive option.

It has been recognized that pipeline block valve spacing may not strongly correlate to public safety in as much as it has no influence on whether an accident occurs and may have little effect on the consequences. The primary objective in establishing block valve location is to facilitate maintenance. The B31.8 Section Committee has in the past proposed revisions to the Code removing the valve spacing requirements, unsuccessfully owing to perceptions of valve spacing being safety-related that may or may not be well founded. This difference in perception led to the compromise language in the 2007 Edition.

The proposed project will review research studies, incident reports, risk models, engineering information about the interaction of pipeline operation and block valve controls, other pipeline standards, and other available data to better understand the relationship between block valve spacing and public safety. The deliverable will be a report summarizing the role of sectionalizing block valves, the factors to consider in their placement, and the safety benefits.

The report will make recommendations to the B31.8 Section Committee for or against valve spacing intervals from the standpoint of public safety, based on available scientific evidence.

The quantity and spacing of sectionalizing block valves has a significant impact on the construction cost of new pipeline systems and in responding to Location Class changes. Projects outside the US may consider use of standards other than ASME where valve spacing allowances are more liberal than those in B31.8. B31.8 is also considering alternative design rules with increased stress levels justified by better quality design and engineering, where different valve spacing allowances may be appropriate. Revisions to the ASME Code can serve as a model for evolution of pipeline safety regulations in the US. Findings of the proposed study will properly rationalize the Code requirements as written or revised accordingly, and may positively influence the important situations described above.

b. Deliverable

The project deliverable shall be a technical report provided as a MS Word .doc file that is formatted in accordance with the ASME ST-LLC template, located here: http://files.asme.org/STLLC/18396.doc. One peer review cycle is anticipated and modifications required to the report, as a result of the review cycle, are the responsibility of the contractor awarded the contract.

c. Schedule

Investigators shall submit a schedule with their proposal that provides major milestones and a reporting schedule. ASME ST-LLC desires that the final deliverable be provided no later than June 30, 2010.

d. Reporting

A brief status report shall be provided monthly, via email, to the ASME ST-LLC project manager. Progress reports shall be presented at ASME B31.8 committee meetings.

e. Travel Requirements

Travel requirements are to present project results to ASME B31.8 at their meetings. Travel expenses shall be reimbursed, within the project budget, per the project Travel Policy.

f. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

ASME ST-LLC is seeking proposals from all qualified organizations including, but not limited to, engineering firms, consultants, academic institutions, and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers. In addition to relevant technical qualifications and experience, applicants must possess an understanding of relevant ASME codes and standards.

g. Basis for Selection and Award

ASME ST-LLC will select the winning proposal by evaluating and comparing the merits of each applicant's complete proposal. This process reflects ASME ST-LLC's desire to select an application based on its potential to achieve program objectives, rather than solely on evaluated technical merit or cost. Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Technical capabilities
- Experience
- Price

- Schedule
- Agreement with Terms and Conditions

ASME ST-LLC reserves the right to award, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this solicitation.

3. Contract Terms and Conditions

A fixed-price contract is preferred, but labor hour and expenses-type proposals will also be considered. Draft terms and conditions are located here http://files.asme.org/STLLC/13937.pdf. The final contractual terms and conditions will be negotiated between ASME ST-LLC and the winning applicant.

ASME ST-LLC will provide access to the required codes, standards, and other technical references.

4. Submission Requirements

a. Proposal Due Date

Proposals and amendments of proposals must be received by June 30, 2009. Applicants are encouraged to transmit their proposal well before this deadline.

b. Anticipated Selection and Award Date

ASME ST-LLC plans to select the winning proposal within two weeks of the proposal deadline.

c. Application Preparation Costs

This solicitation does not obligate ASME ST-LLC to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals, in making necessary studies or designs for the preparation thereof, or to acquire, or contract for any services.

d. Application Clarification

ASME ST-LLC reserves the right to request clarification of proposals and/or supplemental information. The award may be made after few or no exchanges, discussions, or negotiations. Therefore, all applicants are advised to submit their most favorable application to ASME ST-LLC. ASME ST-LLC reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all proposals received in response to this solicitation and to select any proposal, in whole or in part, as a basis for negotiation and/or award. ASME ST-LLC reserves the right to modify or cancel this solicitation. All questions relating to the solicitation must be submitted to the contact below. Any amendments to the solicitation will be posted on the ASME ST-LLC web site (http://stllc.asme.org/Requests_Proposals_RFPs.cfm).

e. Treatment of Proprietary Information

A proposal may include technical and/or other data, including trade secrets and/or privileged, confidential commercial or financial information, which the applicant does not want disclosed to the public or used by ASME ST-LLC for any purpose other than proposal evaluation. To protect such data, the applicant should specifically identify the data to be protected.

f. Proposal Preparation and Submittal Instructions

ASME ST-LLC may form a committee of subject matter experts to evaluate the technical qualifications of applicants. To help facilitate this evaluation, responses should include two separate documents, a Technical Proposal, and a Financial Proposal.

(1) Technical Proposal

(a) Provide organization name and contact information.

(b) Provide evidence of technical capabilities: credentials, qualifications, capabilities, and experience of individuals and the organization.

(c) Describe approach to accomplish the Scope of Work.

(d) Confirm agreement with the Scope of Work for the specified task(s)

(2) Financial Proposal

(a) Provide a fixed price quotation or an hourly billing rate quotation and estimated project maximum.

(b) Confirm agreement with the draft Terms and Conditions, or state any specific exceptions.

(3) Submit Technical and Financial Proposals via e-mail to the ASME ST-LLC contact below.

(4) Responses must be received on or before the deadline.

5. ASME Standards Technology, LLC Contact Information

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