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MEMORANDUM

TO: WYOMING COUNTY ASSESSORS

FROM: ED SCHMIDT

DATE: MARCH 2, 2012

SUBJECT: STATUS OF CAMA FUNDING

I wanted to update you on the current status of the Department's 2013-2014 biennium budget which included a request for funding the move to Version 5. As you are aware, last year we elected to cancel the purchase of hardware and the associated training on V5 once it became clear that CCI's development of V5 had stalled and was not ready for delivery. Now more than a year later it is still not ready. CCI has recently told us that the Wyoming version of V5 is about 90% complete but they still cannot offer us any definitive date as to when it will be ready for prime time.

This uncertainty has presented us with some real problems in terms of estimating what the cost will be for budgeting purposes. Initially CCI told us that V5 would require three servers per county at a very expensive \$19,000+ per server or nearly \$1.6M statewide. The department never believed it would require three servers in every county to operate the new version but with no other reliable estimate we elected to submit the request to the Governor's office and the OCIO's office for approval. We assumed that we would have the opportunity to test Version 5, find a less costly solution such as virtualization and thereby reduce CCI's cost estimate to a more realistic price. Subsequently the plan was to revert the unspent funds to the General Fund. That plan was changed by the OCIO's office and the Appropriations Committee.

The OCIO's office recommended to the Governor that the \$1.6M be reduced to \$350,000. Then about two weeks ago the Appropriations Committee deleted the remaining \$350,000 and told us to come back next year with a Supplemental Budget request when we knew exactly what it was going to cost to purchase hardware for Version 5. It was the Committee's position that Version 5 needed to be tested and proven by CCI in another out-of-state jurisdiction prior to the legislature appropriating funds for V5. Of course we had clearly intended to test V5 before it was installed.

We have now advised CCI that they need to provide us with a tested, functioning V5 no later than October so that we can finalize our supplemental budget request prior to the next legislative session. Without the funds to purchase the necessary hardware, the testing will have to occur in

CCI's offices in Ft. Collins. The department and the county assessor's offices will have access to the test environment using live data provided by Campbell County.

There is one other obstacle that we have been presented as a result of the budget cutting stance of the legislature. The current budget bill contains a provision that will require all state agencies to submit a plan by July 1st for reducing their individual budgets by 4%. Two years ago we had to absorb a 10% cut and we lost two positions along with a significant reduction in our travel budget. This next cut, should it ultimately occur, will require further personnel reductions and at this point, the department can no longer absorb the loss of employees in our sales tax and mineral tax divisions and still maintain the required level of efficiency in collections.

There is one large ticket item in next year's budget that, if offered up as a budget cut, would help the department to avoid any further personnel cuts. That is the piece associated with purchasing the GeoWare/Latitude/ESRI components of the CAMA contract with CCI. This would save the department approximately \$330,000 over the biennium. While GeoWare is a very nice feature to have, in our opinion it is not critical to the valuation process which we are statutorily required to provide. Moreover, roughly half of the counties are not utilizing GeoWare, having elected to purchase or use their own mapping software. Unfortunately, there are some counties which are using GeoWare and if we were to terminate the contract, it would result in a hardship.

The department has already paid for portions of the GeoWare contract with CCI along with the Latitude and ESRI components or, we have encumbered funds necessary to pay for the remaining quarters of calendar year 2012. If the Wyoming Legislature does not provide us with funding to purchase GeoWare, we will be forced to discontinue that service. At this juncture, we have little choice but to submit the GeoWare contract as one of our budget cuts for the 2013 – 2014 biennium. Since we will have to submit a supplemental budget request next year for the V5 hardware, it would make sense to also include a request for the funds necessary to purchase GeoWare. For that we will need your help in making a case for the necessity of having a robust mapping component as one part of a County Assessor's vital assessment tools.

I am sure most of you have experienced funding shortfalls in your own communities so hopefully you will have some sympathy for what we are now experiencing. Our ability to provide you with the tools you need is being severely tested. I share this with you in the hope that you might have some thoughts about how we can go about getting GeoWare for all counties. I am told that the next version of GeoWare will be upgraded to an improved, integrated GIS program called Matix. In the event we drop GeoWare at the end of this year and then sometime in the future elect to upgrade will cost more money. In any event I will be seeking your assistance in the next legislative session to make the case for funding GeoWare.