

# Federal Computer Week

NEWS • TECHNOLOGY • ANALYSIS

## TECHNOLOGY

### STRATEGIES

## State juices up embassy systems

Powerware to supply backup power systems, services at facilities worldwide

BY JUDI HASSON

**M**any people in the United States give little thought to backup power for their computers. But the State Department, which has critical systems in embassies around the world, cannot take electricity for granted.

When a diplomat turns on a computer, the electricity should flow and not be affected by power outages — or local unrest, which is chronic in many Third World countries, officials say.

“We have generators for countries that don’t have constant power, but it’s always a problem in Third World countries,” said Abby Reynolds, State’s director of policy for overseas building operations.

The agency last month awarded a five-year, \$125 million contract to Powerware Corp., a division of Invensys PLC, to provide backup power systems and services at 270 consulates and embassies around the world.

Powerware’s offering includes an uninterruptible power supply system, 50/60 Hz generators, generator set overhauls, power transformers, transfer switches and automatic voltage regulators. In the event of a brownout, blackout or power spike, embassy systems will automatically shift to backup power.

Powerware also will

provide project management, engineering, power audits, installation, systems integration, training and on-site maintenance.

As State works to modernize its technology systems worldwide and develop tighter security policies for visa applications following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a fail-safe electrical system is an important component of its strategy.

“What good is all this wonderful technology if there’s no electricity?” asked Chip Math-er, senior vice president of Acquisition Solu-

tions Inc. “It is absolutely essential to have uninterrupted power.”

In many parts of the world, power is not only unsteady but also unreliable, and State Department facilities face three or four outages a day, according to Walter Davis, managing director of federal systems at Powerware.

“The State Department has backup equipment in all the embassies, but aging equipment needs to be upgraded,” he said. “You have software, hardware and our products — Powerware.”

Davis said the company is working on its first project — installing voltage regulation equipment at the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, which was part of the former Soviet Union.

“We make the electrical system compatible to the local environment. We go in with power equipment solutions. We don’t have to change anything unless there’s a reason to do it,” he said.

It may sound easy, but Powerware’s solutions must provide support to an entire facility and an infrastructure whose security relies on the constant flow of electricity.

“U.S. government installations both at home and abroad depend on uninterrupted access to high-quality power,” said Scott Dysert, vice president of Powerware’s global services division. “By ensuring the highest level of power reliability and availability for their mission-critical applications, our systems will help State Department posts around the world achieve their operational goals.”

State began evaluating its electrical backup systems during the Year 2000 conversion. It found that many systems could not handle the modern technology being installed at facilities worldwide.

“The contingency testing that State did during Y2K revealed gaps in the backup power arrangements. It’s good to see them correcting that,” said Bruce McConnell, former chief of information policy and technology at the Office of Management and Budget and now president of McConnell International LLC.

Powerware also was recently awarded a seven-year, \$76 million Air Force contract for power-protection equipment, systems integration and support services.

“We’re seeing an increased emphasis by the federal government and private companies in putting in additional onsite generator backup power,” said Rick Nicholson, vice president and director of energy information strategies at META Group Inc., a consulting firm.

“Computers are particularly sensitive to power quality and reliability,” he said. “When you are running sophisticated data centers, you need high-quality power.” ■

#### HOW IT WORKS



#### CALLING FOR BACKUP

An uninterruptible power supply system prevents blackouts, brownouts and power surges by storing electricity in a battery and then converting it into a smooth, uninterrupted current.

**Here is how the State Department’s system will work:**

- A local utility company provides electricity to an embassy or consulate.
- AC electricity is converted to DC and stored in an on-site battery.
- Electricity is converted back to AC and delivered to computers or electrical outlets as needed.

Source: Powerware Corp.

# POWERWARE®



Global headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina  
Part of Invensys plc  
48,000 employees with operations in over 30 countries  
40 years of industry experience

## **Broad product portfolio:**

- ▶ UPS
- ▶ AC and DC Power
- ▶ Broadband
- ▶ Remote monitoring & management

## **Powerware products used in various applications:**

- ▶ IT and telecom
- ▶ Financial, medical, and industrial
- ▶ Military and aerospace

## **Global services organization:**

- ▶ Dedicated field service engineers
- ▶ Turnkey integration services
- ▶ Project management
- ▶ Engineering services

