Purchasing Division, Finance Department
218-730-5340 | purchasing@duluthmn.gov
Room 120 | 411 West First Street | Duluth, Minnesota 55802
www.duluthmn.gov

INVITATION TO BID
UTILITY INVOICE MAILING SERVICES

BID NUMBER: 26-AA21 **BIDS DUE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026 AT 2 PM CT**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
ComfortSystems, a division of the City of Duluth Public Works & Utilities Department, provides the citizens of Duluth with water, sewage, and natural gas services. The Division issues approximately 300,000 utility invoices for these services each year.

Comfort Systems is seeking a mailing service provider that can accept an electronic invoice file in txt/xml format, print, fold, sort, insert, barcode, seal, add the correct postage, and mail the invoices. The vendor must also be able to provide additional services such as address change notification.

The specification includes five minimum requirements that must be met for a bidder to be considered responsible. Before a final award decision is made, the selected vendor will be asked to do a paid invoice processing and printing "trial run" to verify capabilities and quality. Reference checks may also be required.

The selected contractor will be issued a one (1) year service contract with three (3) optional one-year renewals.

ANTICIPATED START DATE:
January 2027

PRE-BID MEETING:
There will be no pre-bid meeting.

QUESTIONS:
Please submit any questions regarding this project via e-mail to Purchasing@duluthmn.gov. Responses will be issued as an addendum to this solicitation. Deadline to submit questions is Thursday, August 20, 2026 by 4:00 PM CT.

Proposal forms, contract documents, plans and specifications may also be on file at the following offices: Minnesota Builder's Exchange and Builder's Exchange of Wisconsin.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

All bids must be complete, signed and transmitted in a sealed envelope plainly marked with the bid number, subject matter and opening date and mailed or dropped off at the Purchasing Office, City Hall, 411 W. 1st Street, Room 120, Duluth, MN 55802. E-MAIL BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

The City Purchasing Agent or their designee will conduct a public bid opening immediately after the deadline for receiving bids. Bidders may view the opening by going to https://duluthmn.gov/purchasing/bids-request-for-proposals/ and selecting the appropriate link.

No alternatives to the specification will be considered unless specifically requested. Erasures or other changes to the bid must be initialed and dated, however no special conditions shall be made or included in the bid form by the bidder.

The City of Duluth reserves the right to split the award where there are savings to the City, to waive informalities and to reject any and all bids. Price may not be the only consideration for bid award. Bids must be firm for a minimum of 60 days.

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH YOUR BID:

1. **Exhibit A, Bid Form** - including acknowledgement of any/all addenda and a signature from an authorized representative.
2. **Exhibit B, Unit Price Bid Form**
3. **Exhibit C, Vendor Criteria Form –**Vendor must be able to check 'YES' to all criteria to be deemed responsive.

Please note that the following requirements also apply to this project, and any additional required documents must be submitted prior to award/contract execution.

1. **Insurance** – Vendor must provide proof of Public Liability and Automobile Liability Insurance with limits not less than $1,500,000 Single Limit prior to the commencement of work. The City of Duluth must be named as an additional insured. Please refer to the draft Contract, Section 8.

The City of Duluth is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Contractor shall comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations.

CITY OF DULUTH
Patrice Stalvig
Purchasing Agent

GENERAL BID SPECIFICATIONS

Purchasing Division
120 City Hall, 411 W. 1st Street
Duluth, MN 55802-1189
TEL. 218-730-5340
purchasing@duluthmn.gov

1. General. This document covers quotes or bids requested by the City of Duluth ("City"), including those requested on behalf of its Agents and Authorities. Each authority may issue their own purchase order or contract and will be responsible for it. The City of Duluth Authorities are as follows:
   a. Duluth Airport Authority
   b. Spirit Mountain Recreational Area Authority
   c. Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center
   d. Duluth Transit Authority
   e. Duluth Economic Development Authority
   f. Duluth Housing and Redevelopment Authority
2. Investigation by Bidders. Bidders are responsible for thoroughly reading and understanding the information, instructions, and specifications contained in the Invitation for Bids, and for investigating the site conditions at the Project location(s), if applicable. At bid opening, each bidder will be presumed to have read and to be thoroughly familiar with the plans, specifications and contract documents (including all Addenda). The failure or omission of any bidder to examine any form, instrument, or document shall in no way relieve the bidder from any obligation in respect to their bid.
3. Bidder Questions. Responses to general questions regarding the Invitation for Bids may be made at the discretion of the City. Every request for such interpretation should be in writing and delivered via e-mail or postal mail to the Purchasing Division before the deadline indicated on the Invitation for Bids, or if no deadline is specified, at least five (5) days prior to the scheduled bid opening. Responses will be issued in writing in the form of Addendum or e-mail to prospective bidders.
4. Changes, Corrections & Withdrawal of Bids. Erasures or other changes to the bid must be initialed and dated, however no special conditions shall be made or included in the bid form by the bidder.

   Bidders may make requests to withdraw/replace their bids by notifying the Purchasing Division in writing prior to the bid opening date and time.
5. Unit Pricing. If the total bid price is based on unit pricing, the City will verify the extended bid price for each item (obtained by multiplying the unit bid price by the bid item quantity). If any item is incorrectly calculated, the City will use the unit bid price to recalculate the extended item price and the total bid price.
6. Sales Tax. Do not include sales tax in the unit price. A sales tax exemption certificate will be provided upon request.
7. Bid Submission. Bids may be mailed to the Purchasing Office, City Hall, 411 West 1st Street, Room 120, Duluth, MN 55802, or dropped off in person at the same address. Bids must be received by Purchasing before the time and date specified in the invitation for bid.
8. Non-Collusion Clause. By submitting a bid, the bidder, their agent and/or employee(s) hereby affirm that the attached bid or bids have been arrived at by the bidder independently and have been submitted without collusion with, and without agreement, understanding or planned common course of action with any other vendor of materials, supplies, equipment or services described in the Invitation for Bids, designed to limit independent bidding or competition
9. Award. Award, if made, will be to the responsible bidder submitting the lowest bid which complies with the conditions of the Invitation for Bids and specifications. A bid summary will be posted on the City website immediately following the bid opening. Awards over $150,000 must be approved by City Council.
10. Bidder Qualifications. Per Sec. 41.23(e) of Duluth City Code, contracts shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. In determining the lowest responsible bidder, the City will make such investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability, capacity and skill of the bidder to perform the work and perform it in the time specified without delay or interference; the character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience and efficiency of the bidder; the quality of the bidder's performance of previous contracts or services; the sufficiency of the financial resources, equipment available and ability of the bidder to perform the contract; the quality, availability and adaptability of the supplies or contractual services to the particular use required; the ability of the bidder to provide future maintenance and service for the use of the subject of the contract; and the number and scope of conditions attached to the bid. Bidders shall furnish to the City all such information and data for this purpose, when requested.

    Minnesota law requires that, in order to transact business in the State, including submitting a response to this request for bids/proposals, a corporate entity of any kind must either be organized under Minnesota law or have a Certificate of Authority from the Minnesota Secretary of State to do business in Minnesota (M.S. 303.03). By submitting this bid/proposal as a corporation, you are certifying that the responding corporation complies with this requirement.
11. Rejection of Bids. The City of Duluth reserves the right to reject any and all bids or portions thereof and to waive any informalities or irregularities in bids received whenever such rejection or waiver is in its best interests.

    The City reserves the right to reject any bid if the evidence obtained by the City through such investigation fails to satisfy the City that the bidder is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work as required by the plans and specifications.
12. Liquidated Damages for Failure to Enter into Contract. The successful bidder, upon their failure or refusal to accept a purchase order or execute and deliver the contract, proof of insurance and bonds required within 10 days after receipt of a notice of the acceptance of their bid, shall forfeit to the City, as liquidated damages for such failure or refusal, the security deposited with their bid (if required).
13. Equal Employment Opportunity. Contractor will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws and regulations. Affirmative action must be taken to insure that the employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, color, creed, sex or national origin. The City of Duluth is an equal opportunity employer.
14. Quantities. The City reserves the right to increase or decrease the quantities of items within reason, unless otherwise noted.
15. Prevailing Wages. Per Sec. 2-26 of Duluth City Code, payment of not less than the prevailing wage and salary rates specified in the contract documents and the conditions of employment with respect to certain categories and classifications of employees is required for all construction type projects estimated to exceed $2,000. Contractor will be required to submit certified payrolls with all requests for payment. This does not apply to off-site production and manufacturing of parts and supplies.
16. Validity of Bids. All bids must remain firm for 60 days from the date of bid opening, unless another period is noted in bid documents or otherwise agreed to in writing.
17. Insurance. All vendors doing work on City property, except vendors making routine deliveries, shall submit an insurance certificate verifying insurance coverage as per current City requirements.
18. Reports. Contractors will be required to provide all data required by the city, state or federal funding source(s) for reporting purposes; including, but not limited to job creation and retention data, itemized invoices, payroll records, certifications and licenses.

SPECIFICATIONS
26-AA21 UTILITY INVOICE MAILING SERVICES

ComfortSystems, a division of the City of Duluth Public Works & Utilities Department, provides the citizens of Duluth with water, sewage, and natural gas services. The Division issues approximately 300,000 utility invoices for these services each year.

Comfort Systems is seeking a mailing service provider that can accept an electronic invoice file in .csv format, and print, fold, sort, insert, barcode, seal, add the correct postage, and mail the invoices. The vendor must also be able to include additional inserts and provide notice to the City of any returned mail or address changes.

Data files are currently sent by 2:00 PM CST Monday through Friday and must be processed and mailed the next day. The City requires that the vendor provide an auto confirmation of every electronic file received to ensure accuracy.

Invoices are printed on 8 ½" by 11" paper, double sided, two color (gradations of blue and black) as shown on the attached sample invoice. The variable data is currently printed on the front of the invoice pages only, and is not in color. Static contact and billing information, policy statements, and payment instructions are currently printed on the back of each page. The invoice is tri-folded and perforated so that the bottom third of page 1 can be removed and returned with the payment. All materials required to create the printed invoice are currently provided by the mailing service.

The printed invoice is inserted into a #10 left window envelope, 22# white woven with 23 gray tint, with the City of Duluth logo and the return address for ComfortSystems pre-printed in the upper left-hand corner, as shown on the attached sample envelope. It has black and blue print. The window is 1 ¼" x 4 ¼" placed 5/8" from the bottom. This envelope is currently provided by the mailing service.

In addition to the invoice, a standard #9 right window return envelope is inserted into the mailing envelope. The return envelope is currently provided by the mailing service.

Vendors must meet the attached minimum criteria to be considered responsible detailed in Exhibit C. On the checklist, please indicate whether you can <u>currently</u> meet the requirement by checking YES, if you cannot <u>currently</u> meet the requirement, check NO. The Vendor and Equipment Criteria form must be submitted WITH your bid.

EXHIBIT A - BID FORM
26-AA21 UTLIITY INVOICE MAILING SERVIES

ITEM	TOTAL
1) Total annual estimated cost for standard mailing (from Exhibit B)	$
2) One time initial setup fee (if applicable)	$
Total first year estimated cost	$

____
TOTAL FIRST YEAR COST IN WRITING

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ADDENDA

ADDENDUM # ______ INITIAL/DATE ______

ADDENDUM # ______ INITIAL/DATE ______

ADDENDUM # ______ INITIAL/DATE ______

ADDENDUM # ______ INITIAL/DATE ______

BIDS MUST BE SIGNED BY AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

Signature ______________________________ Date ______________

Name/Title ______________________________

Company Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

City, State, Zip ______________________________

Tel.______________________ E-Mail ______________________

EXHIBIT B - UNIT PRICE BID FORM
26-AA21 UTILITY INVOICE MAILING SERVICES

ALL QUANTITIES ARE ESTIMATES USED FOR COMPARISON AND ARE NOT GUARANTEED

ITEM	QTY	UNIT PRICE (per invoice)	TOTAL
Cost to create the invoice, including receiving the data file, paper, printing, return envelope, & prep to mail.	300,000		$
Cost for one additional insert	300,000		$
Cost for postal presort	300,000		$
Postage (standard one page invoice)	300,000		$
TOTAL ANNUAL ESTIMATED COST FOR STANDARD MAILING (Copy this number onto line 1 on Exhibit A)			$

UNIT PRICING FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES
PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL SERVICES & UNIT PRICES NOT ALREADY LISTED

ITEM	UNIT PRICE (per invoice)
Non-bar coded postage	
Two or more inserts (price per additional insert)	
Return postage	
Address change service	
Cost to provide printed mailing envelope (#10 left window with Duluth logo and return address)	
Foreign mail charge	

EXHIBIT C – VENDOR CRITERIA FORM
26-AA21 UTILITY INVOICE MAILING SERVICES

THE CHECKLIST MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH BID. VENDOR MUST BE ABLE TO CHECK 'YES' TO ALL CRITERIA TO BE DEEMED RESPONSIVE.

1. Vendor is able to provide and perform all functions in-house; no subcontracting is permitted.

   YES ☐ NO ☐

2. Invoices will be printed on a printer with a minimum 600 x 600 DPI resolution.

   YES ☐ NO ☐

3. Vendor has the capability to fold into tri-fold.

   YES ☐ NO ☐

4. Please indicate whether you have on-site technicians to perform maintenance on inserting equipment.

   YES ☐ NO ☐

5. Data files are currently sent by 2:00 PM CST Monday through Friday and must be processed and mailed the next day. Please indicate whether vendor can print up to 1,500 invoices and envelopes, insert each invoice along with any additional bill inserts, and apply postage and mail all 1,500 invoices on the same business day.

   YES ☐ NO ☐

Please state the latest time (Central Standard Time) that the invoice file can be sent electronically by City of Duluth and still guarantee next day mailing of invoices.

Time: ____________________________________

THE CITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REQUEST AND CHECK REFERENCES PRIOR TO MAKING AN AWARD DECISION. AT LEAST THREE REFERENCES ARE REQUIRED TO BE DEEMED A RESPONSIVE BIDDER

NAME	COMPANY	PHONE NO.	EMAIL

ComfortSystems
Serving the City of Duluth

Account No.	Service Address	Billing Date
123456789-001	1234 Main St	07/02/2026

000001

Service Period
05/28/2026 - 06/26/2026

Meter Readings

Previous Balance
$585.14
Penalties
$0.00
Adjustments
$0.00
Payments Received
$585.14 CR
Balance at Billing
$0.00
Current Billing

10 HEAT GAS RESIDENTIAL HEATING

Meter No	Read Dates	Days	Previous	Current	Rate	Usage	Unit of Measure
S3467622	05/27/2026-06/26/2026	29	5812	5932	0.934	120	CCFG

PGA

Meter No	Read Dates	Days	Previous	Current	Rate	Usage	Measure
S3467622	05/27/2026-06/26/2026	29	5812	5932	-0.424	120	CCFG

11-1 1/2 R2 WAT INFRA SURCHARGE

Meter No	Read Dates	Days	Previous	Current	Rate	Usage	Measure
B230134824	05/27/2026-06/26/2026	29	814	842	5.650	28	CCFW

01 CLASS I SANITARY SEWER

Meter No	Read Dates	Days	Previous	Current	Rate	Usage	Measure
B230134824	05/27/2026-06/26/2026	29	814	842	7.650	28	CCFW

WAT INFR SURCH

Meter No	Read Dates	Days	Previous	Current	Rate	Usage	Measure
B230134824	05/27/2026-06/26/2026	29	814	842	0.918	28	CCFW

Charge Code	Amount
GAS	112.08
PGA	50.88 CR
GAS FIXED CHG	9.00
WATER	158.20
WATER FIXED CHG	11.25
SEWER	214.20
SEWER FIXED CHG	6.15
STORM	71.70
MN STATE TAX	4.83
CITY TAX	1.06

Charge Code	Amount
SAFE WATER FEE	15.22
ST LOUIS CO TAX	0.36
WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SURCHARGE	25.70

WATER BILLS INCLUDE THE MN STATE MANDATED SAFE DRINKING WATER FEE OF $15.22

Current Charges
$578.87
Balance Due
$578.87

Due Date	Amount Due
07/23/2026	$578.87

Account No.	Due Date	Amount Due	Amount Paid
	07/23/2026	$578.87	

Service Address

1234 Main St
Duluth, MN 55802

Mailing Address

IF MAILING PAYMENT PLEASE INCLUDE THIS STUB

000001_1000

Joe Customer
1234 Main St
Duluth, MN 55802-1234

CITY OF DULUTH COMFORT SYSTEMS
PO BOX 860643
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55486-0643

161515280007 0000057887 00

EXHIBIT E - BILL BACKER SAMPLE

Phone Numbers

Natural Gas Emergencies, 24-hour response	**218-730-4100**
Water and Sewer Emergencies, 24-hour response	218-730-4000
Customer Service, Budget Billing, EasyPay, Rates	218-730-4050
Comfort Policy, Home Energy Loans	218-730-4050
Energy Audits	218-525-3078 or 218-336-1038
Pay by Phone	833-327-6285

Correspondence Mailing Address

Public Works & Utilities Department, 520 Garfield Ave, Duluth, MN 55802

Payment Mailing Address

Public Works & Utilities Department, P.O. Box 860643, Minneapolis, MN 55486-0643

Customer Copy

The upper portion of this statement is your copy and itemizes the details of your account since your last billing. Please save for your records

Meter Reading Policy

Each gas and water meter shall be read monthly except when inclement weather or lack of access to the meter prevents reading on the scheduled date. This may cause an estimated reading to be used on the bill.

Billing Payment Dropboxes

Garfield Service Center 520 Garfield Ave, Duluth, MN 55802

Finance Office Room 120 City Hall (during regular business hours)

Explanation of Abbreviations on Statement

* An asterisk indicates a correction factor was applied to the metered usage on the bill.

Interest Charge

Interest is charged at 1.33 percent per month (annual effective rate of 17.23 percent) on all charges or budget payments billed and not paid prior to the date of your next bill.

Checks

make checks payable to "Duluth Public Utilities." A $30 fee will be charged on all dishonored checks.

Payments using Credit Card or Debit Card

Visit www.comfortsystemsduluth.com to pay your bill with a credit card or eCheck.

Charges and Payments

The due date shown is for current charges only. Previous balances are due upon receipt of this bill. Payments are applied to the oldest balance first.

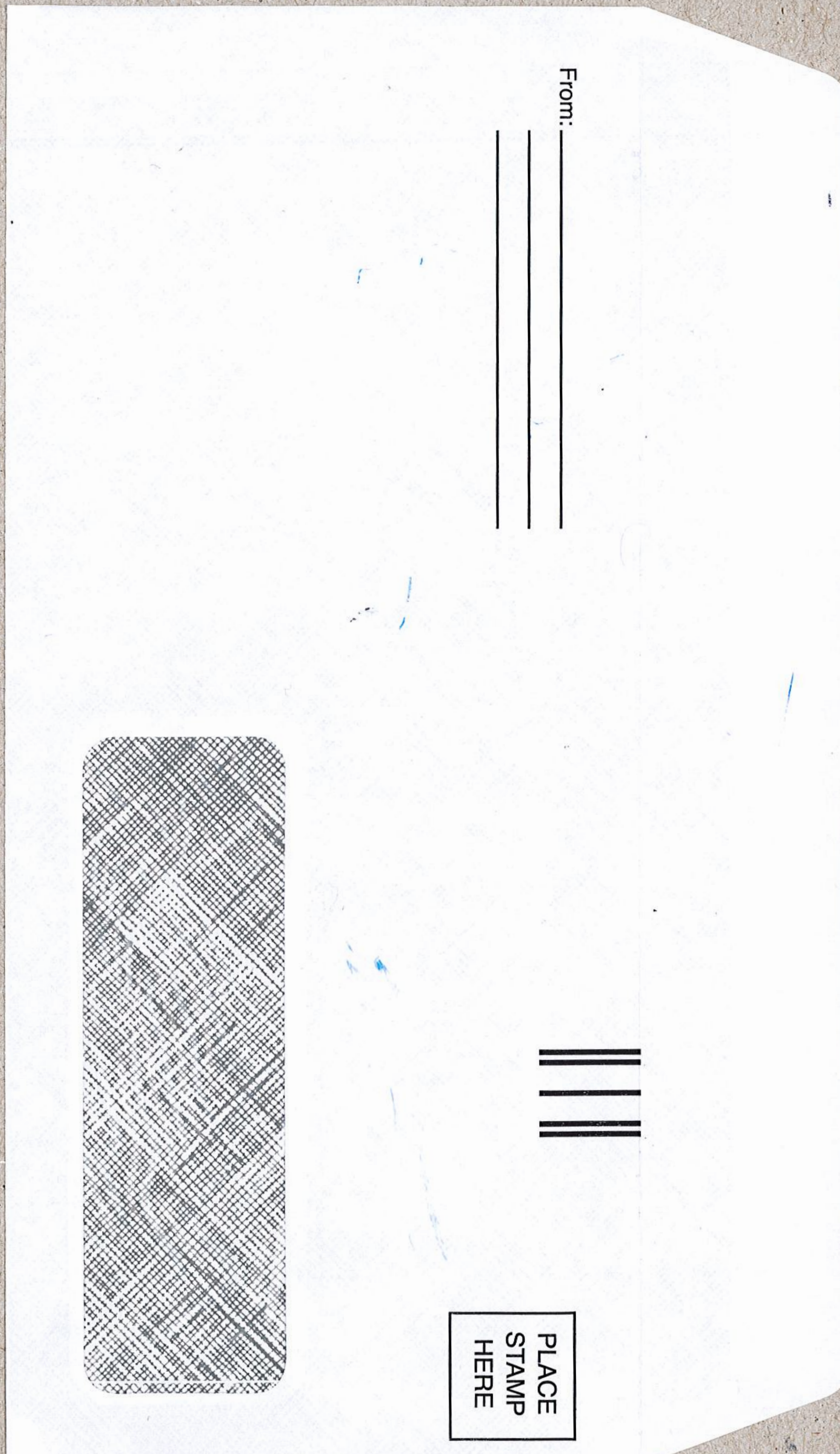
Assistance in Paying Your Billing

Contact AEOA at 623-3011, St. Louis County at 726-2101, or the Salvation Army at 722-7934 to determine eligibility for assistance.

Reinstatement of Services Shut Off for Non payment

Services shut off for nonpayment will be restored the next business day following payment of all required charges and fees.

EXHIBIT F - ENVELOPE SAMPLE



ComfortSystems

City of Duluth Public Works
& Utilities Department

P.O. Box 169001
Duluth, MN 55816-9001

MULTIPLE ACCOUNT INVOICES MAY BE ENCLOSED

Window: 1-1/4" x 4-1/4" - Poly
From Left: 5/8"
From Bottom: 5/8"

PROOF DATE: 10/25/17	**ORDER / FORM / ID #:** 596841	**CUSTOMER:** INFOSEND INC	**PO#:**
CSR:	**QTY:** 250,000 **SIZE:** 4-1/8" x 9-1/2" **STYLE:** SS	**FLAP SIZE:** 1-5/16" **GUM:** FULL	**PAPER:** 24# White Wove
WIN 1: 1-1/4" x 4-1/4" **LEFT:** 5/8" **BOTTOM:** 5/8"	**WIN 2:** **LEFT:** **BOTTOM:**	**WIN 3:** **LEFT:** **BOTTOM:**	
OUTSIDE COLORS: Black 3005 Blue		**INSIDE COLOR & TINT#:** 423 Gray	
DIE#:	**APPROVED:** AS IS ☐ WITH CHANGES ☐ CORRECT & RE-PROOF ☐	**BY:**	**DATE:**

IMPORTANT: This proof is presented to you for your review so YOU can be sure your job is set correctly. Please check CAREFULLY for any errors or issues including misspellings, grammatical errors, missing fonts, missing or re-wrapping text, or misplaced images *(both in your supplied electronic files and generated design/composition)* that may appear. We *(your supplier, vendor or agents)* will not be responsible for errors you neglect to bring to our attention. Unless otherwise specified on the proofs, throat depths, knife angles, adhesive and patch layouts, and other construction specifics are approximations for reference only and may not be matched exactly during production.

REVISION

OPERATOR INITIALS: JL