

Shark Customer Robert W. Baird Eyes Alternatives

As Shark Information Services Corp. sits on the block, put up for sale by its parent Data Broadcasting Corp. (DBC) (*IMD*, Jan. 30), one of its largest clients may be preparing to jump ship. Milwaukee-based Robert W. Baird & Co. is in the process of evaluating offerings from other equity quote vendors. Shark's data services currently support 900 users associated with Baird.

According to one source, who says Baird's contract with Shark is close to expiration, Baird does not plan to renew its contract for the vendor's equity quote service. Officials at Baird and Shark would neither confirm nor deny that the contract won't be renewed. "We're happy with Shark, but we are also looking at other vendors," a Baird official says. The official says Baird is now evaluating systems offered by ADP and ILX Systems Inc. He says the fact that Shark is on the block has nothing to do with Baird's consideration of other vendors.

Meanwhile, the source says Baird has been beta-testing the new version of Shark's equity quote service for the past four months. The system runs on IBM 486-based PCs, he says.

More Than a Network

Officials at Shark and Baird would not comment on the original contract between the two parties, which the source says covers five years. But the source says Shark was contracted to provide more than a retail broker network: Shark provided both the communi-

cations to the remote and corresponding offices and the quotes, the source says. Shark installed a Tandem Computers Corp. computer in Chicago as part of this back-office network. Subsequently, Baird constructed its own back-office network to replace the Shark system. The source says that network was brought online roughly three years ago.

A decision in Shark's search for a new parent could be finalized in 30 days.

Baird has long been a key Shark client. In 1992, when bankrupt Financial News Network Inc. announced a reorganization plan for its market data subsidiaries, including Shark, (*IMD*, March 30, 1992), Shark was installed firmwide at four brokerage houses of size: Baird, Jefferies & Co. of Los Angeles, Southwest Securities Inc. of Dallas and Cleveland-based Prescott Ball & Turben Inc. The reorganization plan assumed three of the firms—Baird, Jefferies and Prescott Ball—would renew "at existing prices," in 1994 and 1995.

Word about the prospective sale of Shark emerged as DBC was in the process of finalizing its acquisition of Broadcast International, a vendor of real-time financial information services as well as other business information services. According to a source at DBC, the vendor is hoping to net in the range of \$20 million for Shark's equity quote services. This source says ADP and Reuters, among others, are in the running to acquire Shark. Other sources say ADP is the front runner in the Shark bid-

ding competition. A decision could be finalized within 30 days, one source says.

Herd

• In recent months, a trio of **Fame Information Services Inc.** personnel has parted ways with the software vendor: president **Joseph Weisbord**, manager of client support **Yogi Thambiah** and vice president of sales **Ed Berko**. Weisbord left Fame in January to take a post as head of global security settlement systems at **Citibank**. Thambiah departed from Fame last November to assume a position as head of **J.P. Morgan & Co.**'s so-called financial data services group. The whereabouts of Berko, who bid farewell to Fame about two weeks ago, could not be determined at press time. The aforementioned departures follow the earlier exit of Fame executive vice president **Eric Resnick**; Resnick took a post with **Datastream International Ltd.** last September (*IMD*, Sept. 12, 1994).

Meanwhile, a source close to Fame says that the vendor has hired two marketing and development staff: **Howard Bomze** and **Paul Bradley**. The source says that Bomze, who previously served as a senior vice president at **Bridge Information Systems Inc.**, was hired last September to be "in charge" of development at Fame. Bradley, a former **PC Quote Inc.** employee, was appointed Fame's "senior marketing person covering the Boston and Toronto area" last August. According to the source—who asserts that Fame now has a total of 60 employees—the personnel shake-