LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

INVITATION TO BID ONLY

BIDDER MUST FILL IN COMPANY NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS (PRINTED OR TYPED)

PHONE:

FAX:

EMAIL:

FAILURE TO SIGN WILL DISQUALIFY BID

BID SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
June 8, 2022 @ 2PM

BID NUMBER:
50012-520-22B

DEPARTMENT
Athletics

PRICE MUST BE FIRM FOR AT LEAST 30 DAYS FROM OPENING DATE

DELIVERY IN _____ DAYS

TERMS

BIDDER AGREES TO COMPLY WITH ALL CONDITIONS BELOW AND ATTACHED TO THIS REQUEST.

Prices are to be complete and the FOB point to be Louisiana Tech University unless otherwise specified.

RETURN THIS FORM TO:

PURCHASING OFFICE
P.O. Box 3157
208 Keeny Circle, Rm. 408
Ruston, LA 71272

Phone: 318-257-4205
Fax: 318-257-3772

Company Quote #
if applicable

Typed or Printed Name

Authorized Signature/Title

ITEM:	COMPLETE SPECIFICATIONS	QTY. & UNIT:	UNIT PRICE:	AMOUNT:
	*****RE-BID***** Louisiana Tech University's Athletics Department is now accepting SEALED bids for the following: **Football Sports Performance Produce, Assorted Dry Foods, & Home Goods Items** Items to be ordered on an as needed basis Prices to remain firm July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 Must bid on **all** items on Table 1. Cold items must arrive cold or cold-packed. Frozen items must be shipped and arrive frozen. Louisiana Tech University Sports Performance will determine which quantity best fits our needs. Include all shipping/handling charges in the bid prices. Also include any and all discounts on your bid document. Bid will be awarded to the overall low bidder based on lowest quantity listed for each item. ****Please see the attached Bid Specifications**** **ALL BIDS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE LOUISIANA TECH PURCHASING OFFICE VIA MAIL OR IN PERSON. DO NOT FAX OR EMAIL.** For questions or more information, please contact Dave Scholz at dscholz@latech.edu.			

IMPORTANT: If bidding other than requested brand and product number (or style), enclose sufficient literature to determine compliance with specifications. Failure to comply with this request may eliminate your bid from consideration. Any manufacturer's names, trade names, brand names, or catalog numbers used in the specifications are for the purpose of describing and establishing general quality levels. Such references or not intended to be restrictive. Bids will be considered for any brand which meets or exceeds the quality of the specifications listed for any item.

Schedule of Items

Page No. 2
Purchase Req. # 97 7949
Bid No. 50012-520-22B

Important: If bidding other than requested brand and product number (or style), please enclose sufficient literature to determine compliance with specification. Failure to comply with this request may eliminate your bid from consideration. Any manufacture's names, trade, brand names, or catalog numbers used in the specifications are for the purpose of describing and establishing general quality levels. Such references are not intended to be restrictive. Bids will be considered for any brand, which meets or exceeds the quality of the specifications listed for any items.

ITEM	Description	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	Naval Orange (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
2	Gala Apples (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
3	Fuji Apples (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
4	Honey Crisp Apples (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
5	Clementines (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
6	Peaches (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
7	Green Pears (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
8	Plums (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
9	Bananas (minimum 2 dozen)	per case		
10	Frozen Mixed Berries (Strawberry, Blueberry, Blackberry) (minimum 12 ounces)	per case		
11	Frozen Avocado (minimum 12 ounces)	per bag		
12	Jerky (single serving strips) (specify number of strips per box and case)	per box per case		
13	Hard Boiled Eggs	per dozen		
14	Natural Peanut Butter (ONLY peanuts, salt, peanut oil) (specify ounces per jar)	per jar		
15	Birch Benders Pancake and Waffle Mix (minimum 12 ounces)	per bag		
16	Cream of Rice (minimum 4 ounces per box) (specify boxes per case)	per case		
17	Gluten Free Instant Oatmeal Packets (minimum 4 ounces per box) (specify boxes per case)	per case		
18	Rice Cakes (minimum 4 per bag) (specify bags per case)	per case		
19	Dave's Killer Bread Loaves (various flavors)	per loaf		
20	Skinny Pop Popcorn (minimum 1 ounce)	per bag		
21	Gluten Free Pretzels (minimum 1 ounce)	per bag		
22	Kerrygold Irish Butter or Organic Butter (minimum 4 ounces)	per package		
23	Plain or Vanilla Greek Yogurt (32 ounce Tubs and 5.3 ounce cartons)	each		

Schedule of Items

Purchase Req. # 97 7949
Bid No. 50012-520-22B

Important: If bidding other than requested brand and product number (or style), please enclose sufficient literature to determine compliance with specification. Failure to comply with this request may eliminate your bid from consideration. Any manufacture's names, trade, brand names, or catalog numbers used in the specifications are for the purpose of describing and establishing general quality levels. Such references are not intended to be restrictive. Bids will be considered for any brand, which meets or exceeds the quality of the specifications listed for any items.

ITEM	Description	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
24	Plain or Vanilla Cow's Milk Yogurt (32 ounce Tubs and 5.3 ounce cartons)	each		
25	String Cheese (minimum 2 dozen) (specify dozens per case)	per case		
26	Fair Life 30 Gram Protein Shakes (chocolate or vanilla)	per bottle		
27	Almond Milk (plain) (30 calories or less per serving)	per 64 ounce carton		
28	Organic Maple Syrup (32 ounce or larger bottle)	per bottle		
29	Raw Honey (32 ounce or larger bottle)	per bottle		
30	No High Fructose Syrup Ketchup (31 ounce or larger bottle)	per bottle		
31	Quest Protein Bars (12 or 14 Bar Box)	per box		
32	Stevia Packets (minimum 50 packets) (specify packets per case)	per case		
33	Kind Bar (list all sizes and flavor) (specify quantity per case)	per case		
34	RX Bars (list all sizes and flavor) (specify quantity per case)	per case		
35	Plastic Spoons (minimum 25 spoons) (specify quantity per case)	per case		
36	Plastic Forks (minimum 25 forks) (specify quantity per case)	per case		
37	Plastic Knives (minimum 25 knives) (specify quantity per case)	per case		
38	Avocado Oil (2 liter bottle or larger)	per bottle		
39	Himalayan or Redmond's Real Salt	per pound		

2022 LOUISIANA TECH FOOTBALL SPORTS PERFORMANCE REQUEST FOR BID

Provide produce, assorted dry goods, and home goods items for Louisiana Tech Football for the 2023 fiscal year as per the following specifications:

1. Company carries the majority of the products listed in Table 1 (below). Please list a substitute if you do not carry the brand listed where applicable.
2. Company will designate a certified representative to handle Louisiana Tech Athletic account.
3. Have the Ability to Ship Directly to the Davison Athletics Complex on the Campus of Louisiana Tech University at least a two-times per week.

Table 1 – Products Requested. Please Include Information on Additional Product Line if Desired

Product	Notes / Requests
Navel Orange	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Gala Apples	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Fuji Apples	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Honey Crisp Apples	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Clementines	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Peaches	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Green Pears	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Plums	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Bananas	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Frozen Mixed Berries (Strawberry, Blueberry, Blackberry)	Price per Bag – Minimum 12 Ounces
Frozen Avocado	Price per Bag – Minimum 12 Ounces
Jerky	Boxes or Cases of Single Serving Strips
Hard Boiled Eggs	Price per Dozen
Natural Peanut Butter	Price per Jar / Only Peanuts, Salt, Peanut Oil
Birch Benders Pancake and Waffle Mix	Price per Bag – Minimum 12 Ounces
Cream of Rice	Price per Case – Minimum 4 Ounces per Box
Glute Free Instant Oatmeal Packets	Price per Case – Minimum 4 Ounces per Box
Rice Cakes	Price per Case – Minimum 4 per Bag
Dave's Killer Bread Loaves	Various Flavors / Price per Loaf
Skinny Pop Popcorn	Price per Bag – Minimum 1 Ounce
Gluten Free Pretzels	Price per Bag – Minimum 1 Ounce
Kerrygold Irish Butter or Organic Butter	Price per Package – Minimum 4 Ounces
Plain or Vanilla Greek Yogurt	32 Ounce Tubs and 5.3 Ounce Cartons

Plain or Vanilla Cow's Milk Yogurt	32 Ounce Tubs and 5.3 Ounce Cartons
Product	**Notes/Requests**
String Cheese	Price per Case – Minimum 2 Dozen
Fair Life 30 Gram Protein Shakes	Chocolate or Vanilla – Price Per Bottle
Almond Milk	Plain / 30 Calories or Less Per Serving
Organic Maple Syrup	32 Ounce or Larger Bottle
Raw Honey	32 Ounce or Larger Bottle
No High Fructose Corn Syrup Ketchup	31 Ounce or Larger Bottle
Quest Protein Bars	Price per 12 or 14 Bar Box
Stevia Packets	Price per Case – Minimum 50 Packets
Kind Bars	Price per Case / List All Sizes and Flavor
RX Bars	Price per Case / List All Sizes and Flavor
Plastic Spoons	Price per Case – Minimum 25 Spoons
Plastic Forks	Price per Case – Minimum 25 Forks
Plastic Knives	Price per Case – Minimum 25 Knives
Avocado Oil	2 Liter Bottle or Larger
Himalayan or Redmond's Real Salt	Price per Pound / Price per Bag

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR A SEALED BID
INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

1. Read the entire bid, including all terms and conditions and specifications.

2. Louisiana Tech University is not liable for any cost incurred by the bidders prior to execution of a contract and the issuance of a purchase order. Any bidder who ships or otherwise expends time or money prior to award as defined does so at the bidder's own risk.

3. All bid prices must be typed or written in ink. Any corrections, erasures or other forms of alteration to unit prices should be initialed by the bidder. If the bidder needs to submit a change, question, exception, or modification to any aspect of the bid specifications, terms, conditions, or bidder instructions, must do so in written form submitted to the Louisiana Tech University Purchasing Office prior to the bid opening date. All responses and/or addenda will be officially submitted by the Louisiana Tech University Purchasing Office 72 business hours before the bid opening date. Business hours is defined as University operating hours while the University is open. Unless received as specified above, all bid information will remain unchanged.

4. This bid is to be manually signed in ink.

5. Bid prices shall include all delivery charges paid by the vendor, F.O.B. Destination, unless otherwise provided in the solicitation. Bids requiring deposits, "payment in advance" or "C.O.D" may be rejected. Payment is to be made within 30 days after receipt of properly executed invoice or delivery, whichever is later.

6. Amount of bid bond required: every bid submitted for in excess of fifty thousand dollars shall be accompanied by a bid bond guaranteed by a surety company qualified to do business in the state of Louisiana. The bid bond shall be for five percent of the official bid amount.

7. To assure consideration of your bid, all bids and addenda should be returned in an envelope or package clearly marked with the bid opening date and the bid number; or submitted in the special envelope, if furnished for that purpose.

8. Bids submitted are subject to provisions of the laws of the State of Louisiana including but not limited to L.R.S. 39:1551-1736; Purchasing rules and regulations; executive orders; standard terms and conditions; special conditions; and specifications listed in this solicitation.

9. <u>Important</u>: By signing the bid, the bidder certifies compliance with all instructions to bidders, terms conditions and specifications, and further certifies that this bid is made without collusion or fraud. This bid is to be manually signed in ink by a person authorized to bind the vendor (see no. 27). All bid information shall be in ink or typewritten.

10. Address all inquiries and correspondence to the Louisiana Tech University Office of Purchasing at the address and telephone number listed herein.

11. Bid forms: All written bids, unless otherwise provided for, must be submitted on, and in accordance with, forms provided, and properly signed (see no. 27). Bids submitted in the following manner will not be accepted:

    A. Bid contains no signature indicating intent to be bound;
    B. Bid sent by facsimile equipment;
    C. Bid filled out in pencil; and
    D. Bid not submitted on the designated bid forms.

12. Bids must be received at the address specified in the solicitation prior to bid opening time in order to be considered.

13. Standards of quality – Any product or service bid shall conform to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and the specifications contained in the solicitation. If bidding other than the requested brand or product number (or style), enclose sufficient literature to determine compliance with specifications. Failure to comply with this request may eliminate your bid from consideration. Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation document, any manufacturer's name,

trade name, brand name, or catalog number used in the specification is for the purpose of describing the standard of quality, performance, and characteristics desired; and is not intended to limit or restrict competition. Bidder must specify the brand and model name of the product offered in the bid. Bids not specifying brand and model number shall be considered as offering the exact product specified in the solicitation. See bid document for full requirements.

14. New Products: Unless specifically called for in the solicitation documents, all products for purchase must be new, never previously used, and the current model and/or packaging. No remanufactured, demonstrator, used or irregular product will be considered for purchase unless otherwise specified in the solicitation documents. The manufacturer's standard warranty will apply unless otherwise stated in the solicitation.

15. Louisiana Tech University reserves the right to award items separately, grouped or on an all-or-none basis and to reject any or all bids and waive any informalities.

16. This agreement is non-exclusive and shall not in any way preclude Louisiana Tech University from entering into similar agreements and/or arrangements with other vendors or from acquiring similar, equal, or like goods and/or services from other entities or sources.

17. Bid opening: Bidders may attend the bid opening, but no information or opinions concerning the ultimate contract award will be given at the bid opening or during the evaluation process. Bids may be examined within 72 hours after bid opening. Information pertaining to completed files may be secured by visiting the Louisiana Tech University Purchasing Office during normal working hours. Written bid tabulations will not be furnished prior to 72 hours.

18. Prices: Unless otherwise specified by Louisiana Tech University in the solicitation, bid prices must be complete, including transportation prepaid by bidder to destination and firm for acceptance for a minimum of 30 days. If accepted, prices must be firm for the contractual period.

19. Taxes: Vendor is responsible for including all applicable taxes, fees, and tariffs in the bid price. Louisiana Tech University is exempt from all Louisiana state and local sales and use taxes. By accepting an award, resident and non-resident firms acknowledge their responsibility for the payment of all taxes duly accessed by the State of Louisiana and its political subdivisions for which they are liable, including but not limited to: franchise taxes, privilege taxes, sales taxes, use taxes, ad valorem taxes, etc.

20. Contract renewals: In the event that bid specifications include a renewal option, a term contract may be extended for two additional 12-month periods at the same prices, terms, and conditions upon mutual agreement of the State of Louisiana agency and the contractor. In such cases, the total contract term cannot exceed 36 months.

21. Contract cancellation: Louisiana Tech University has the right to cancel any contract, in accordance with purchasing rules and regulations, including but not limited to: (1) failure to deliver within the time specified in the contract; (2) failure of the product or service to meet specifications, conform to sample quality or to be delivered in good condition; (3) misrepresentation by the vendor; (4) fraud, collusion, conspiracy or other unlawful means of obtaining any contract with the University; (5) conflict of contract provisions with constitutional or statutory provisions of state or federal law; (6) any other breach of contract. Louisiana Tech University has the right to cancel any contract for convenience at any time by giving thirty (30) days written notice to the vendor. In such cases, the vendor shall be entitled to payment for complaint deliverables in progress.

22. Applicable law: All contracts shall be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of Louisiana.

23. In accordance with Executive Order Number JBE 2018-15, effective May 22, 2018, for any contract for $100,000 or more and for any contractor with five or more employees, Contractor, or any Subcontractor, shall certify it is not engaging in a boycott of Israel, and shall, for the duration of this contract, refrain from a boycott of Israel. The State reserves the right to terminate this contract if the Contractor, or any Subcontractor, engages in a boycott of Israel during the term of the contract.

24. The bidder agrees to abide by the requirements of the following as applicable: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Federal Executive Order 11246 as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended, and bidder agrees to abide by the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Bidder agrees not to discriminate in its employment practices, and will render services under this contract without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, political affiliation, disability, or age in any matter relating to employment. Any act of discrimination committed by bidder, or failure to comply with these statutory obligations when applicable shall be grounds for termination of any contract entered into as a result of this solicitation.

25. Special accommodation: Any "qualified individual with a disability" as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, who has submitted a bid and desires to attend the bid opening, must notify the Louisiana Tech University Office of Purchasing in writing not later than seven days prior to the bid opening date of their need for special accommodations. If the request cannot be reasonably provided, the individual will be informed prior to the bid opening.

26. Indemnity: Contractor agrees, upon receipt of written notice of a claim or action, to defend the claim or action, or take other appropriate measure, to indemnify, and hold harmless, the state, its officers, its agents and its employees from and against all claims and actions for bodily injury, death or property damages caused by the fault of the contractor, its officers, its agents, or its employees. Contractor is obligated to indemnify only to the extent of the fault of the contractor, its officers, its agents, or its employees. However, the contractor shall have no obligation as set forth above with respect to any claim or action from bodily injury, death or property damages arising out of the fault of the state, its officers, its agents or its employees.

27. Signature authority: Attention: R.S. 39:1594(c) (4) requires evidence of authority to sign and submit bids to the State of Louisiana. You must indicate which of the following apply to the signer of this bid.

    Please circle one:

    1) The signer of this bid is either a corporate officer who is listed on the most current annual report on file with the Secretary of State or a member of a partnership or partnership in commendam as reflected in the most current partnership records on file with the Secretary of State. A copy of the annual report or partnership must be submitted to this office before contract award.

    2) The signer of this bid is a representative of the bidder authorized to submit this bid as evidenced by documents such as Corporate Resolution, Certification as to Corporate Principal, etc. If this applies, a copy of the resolution, certification, or other supportive documents must be attached hereto.

    3) The bidder has filed with the Secretary of State an affidavit or resolution or other acknowledged/authentic document indicating that the signer is authorized to submit bids for public contracts. A copy of the applicable document must be submitted to this office before contract award.

    4) The signer of the bid has been designated by the bidder as authorized to submit bids on the bidder's vendor registration on file with this office.

28. In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 39:2182, in awarding contracts after August 15, 2010, any public entity is authorized to reject a proposal or bid form, or not award the contract to, a business in which any individual with an ownership interest of five percent or more, has been convicted of, or has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any state felony or equivalent federal felony crime committed in the solicitation or execution of a contract or bid awarded under the laws governing public contracts under the provisions of chapter 10 of Title 38 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950; professional, personal, consulting, and social services procurement under the provisions of Chapter 16 of Title 39, or the Louisiana Procurement Code under the provisions of Chapter 17 of Title 39.

29. It is agreed that the Legislative Auditor of the State of Louisiana and/or the Office of the Governor, Division of Administration auditors shall have the option of auditing all accounts which relate to this contract.

30. The continuation of this contract is contingent upon the appropriation of funds to fulfill the requirements of the contract by the legislature. If the legislature fails to appropriate sufficient monies to provide for the continuation of the contract, or if such appropriation is reduced by the veto of the Governor or by any means provided in the Appropriations Act to prevent the total appropriation for the year from exceeding revenues for that year, or for any other lawful purpose, and the effect of such reduction is to provide insufficient monies for the continuation of the contract.

31. Whenever a public entity enters in to a contract in excess of five-thousand dollars ($5,000) for the construction, alteration, or repair of any Public Works, the official representative of the public entity shall reduce the contract to writing and have it signed by the parties. When an emergency as provided in R.S. 38:2212(D) is deemed to exist for the construction, alteration, or repair of any Public Works and the contract for such emergency work is less than fifty-thousand dollars ($50,000), there shall be no requirement to reduce the contract to writing (R.S. 38:2241).

32. For each contract in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) per project, the public entity shall require of the contractor a bond with good, solvent, and sufficient surety in a sum of not less than fifty percent (50%) of the contract price for the payment by the contractor or subcontractor to claimants as defined in R.S. 38:2242. The bond furnished shall be a statutory bond and no modification, omissions, additions in or to the terms of the contract, in the plans or specifications, or in the manner and mode of payment shall in any manner diminish, enlarge, or otherwise modify the obligations of the bond. The bond shall be executed by the contractor with surety or sureties approved by the public entity and shall be recorded with the contract in the office of the recorder of mortgages in the parish where the work is to be done not later than thirty days after the work has begun.

33. For construction projects falling within classifications of 37:2150 the bidder must be fully qualified under any state or local licensing law for contractors in effect at the time and at the location of the work before submitting his bid. In the state of Louisiana, revised statutes 37:2150, et seq. Will be considered, if applicable. The contractor shall be responsible for determining that all of his sub-bidders or prospective subcontractors are duly licensed in accordance with law. On any bid in excess of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000), the Contractor shall certify that he is licensed under R.S. 37:2150-2163 and show his license number on the bid. The bid envelope shall be identified on the outside with the Name of the Project, Bid Number, Bid Time, the Name of the Bidder and the License Number of the Bidder.

TO: Louisiana Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Entrepreneurships

RE: Veteran Initiative – Act 167 of the 2009 Legislative Session

➢ ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR PARTICIPATION?

- Are you a veteran-owned small entrepreneurship or a service-connected disabled veteran-owned small entrepreneurship in accordance with documentation from the United States Department of Veteran Affairs or the Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs?
- Are you a Louisiana domiciled business?
- Do you have less than fifty (50) full-time employees?
- Are your annual gross revenue receipts $5,000,000 or less (for construction) or $3,000,000 for (non-construction) for each of the previous three (3) tax years?

If your answers are yes, your company may be eligible for participation in the Louisiana Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Entrepreneurship Program, also known as the Veteran Initiative.

➢ WHAT IS THE VETERAN INITIATIVE?

The Veteran Initiative, created by LRS 39:2171 through 2179 and LRS 51:931, provides additional opportunities for certified Louisiana-based small entrepreneurships to participate in contracting and procurement with the State. Key features of the programs are:

- This is a goal-oriented program
- It is race and gender neutral
- Participation is restricted to Louisiana-based certified veteran-owned and service-connected disabled veteran-owned small entrepreneurships

The rules governing the implementation of the program are located at http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/se/se.htm.

➢ WHY IS CERTIFICATION IMPORTANT?

Certification is required for the participation in the Veteran Initiative. Under this program, you may be given increased opportunity to participate in Louisiana state contracts. Certain contracts may be awarded to your business without competition. And, certification is one of the methods that the State of Louisiana will utilize as a basis for benchmarking for annualized procurement and contracting goals.

➢ WHAT AGENCY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION?

The Louisiana Department of Economic Development (LED) is responsible for certifying Small Entrepreneurships for participation in the program. The (LED) Small Business Certification System may be accessed by https://smallbiz.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com/Account/Login. For additional information regarding certification, please contact the LED at 800.450.8115 or 225.342.3000.

➢ WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS?

The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for disseminating information on this program and other veterans' benefits to Louisiana veterans. Information on this program and other veterans' benefits can be accessed at www.vetaffairs.al.gov.

The State of Louisiana is committed to the success of this program and encourages your participation.