



Summer 2006
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Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M.
Purchasing Agent

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Pct. 2 Commissioner Karen Sonleitner
Pct. 3 Commissioner Gerald Daugherty
Pct. 4 Commissioner Margaret Gomez

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Travis County Purchasing Quarterly

In the Spotlight Rebecca Gardner

By Jerome T. Guerrero

One needs to have a big heart to work in the field of social services, to enjoy serving others and know you are making a difference in the lives of others. Rebecca chose her career after some years in social services for the disabled. "I enjoyed working with the disabled population."

She started as a temp for a state agency, then was hired full time to work in "direct care" with the disabled. As she moved up the career ladder, she moved into contract monitoring and purchasing. When an opportunity became available at Travis County, she pursued it out of the desire to expand her knowledge.

One of the first things I noticed about



Rebecca was her quiet servant's heart. I have never heard her say no to anyone. She works with professional service contracts specializing in Health & Human Services and indigent care. Rebecca enjoys hearing from the people she works with on her contracts. "It makes me feel good about my job," she says,

continued on page 2

2005 Bond Kick-Off

By Jerome T. Guerrero

May 10, 2006 was a busy night for the Purchasing Office. A Bond Kick-Off event was held in the Commissioners Court Room. This event allowed potential vendors the opportunity to learn more about upcoming contract opportunities resulting from the 2005 Bond election. Vendors also were able to meet the purchasers who will be soliciting these projects.

After networking and greeting the participants, Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., Purchasing Agent introduced the panel which included Roger El Khoury, P.E., Facilities Management Department, Steve Manilla, Public Works Director, Transportation and Natural Resources, and Marvin Brice,



C.P.P.B., Assistant Purchasing Agent. The panel presented upcoming projects and plans for Travis County. Mr. El Khoury and Mr. Manilla went into great detail of the upcoming projects and

expansions around Travis County.

Ms. Grimes introduced some of Travis County's partners which included Texas Department of Transportation, Lone Star Infrastructure (State Highway 130 Project), Community Mentor Protégé Initiative (CMPI) and WorkSource Programs.

Contact the Purchasing Office at 854-9700 for more information.



Consultant Updates Court on HUB Program Improvements

Colette Holt, a nationally recognized attorney who specializes in public contracting and affirmative action, testified on May 23, 2006, to the Travis County Commissioners Court. Ms. Holt presented the first part of her recommendations for the Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) Program. Ms. Holt is widely experienced in conducting litigation, consulting and testimony defending affirmative action and diversity requirements.

HUB Programs operate in an environment where the courts make it difficult to have race- and gender-conscious programs. Most local programs challenged in the last several years have been struck down. A successful HUB Program needs to have two elements, strong evidence of discrimination, and remedies narrowly tailored to that evidence. There are large and statistically significant disparities for African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and for woman-owned businesses, which means the County has solid statistical evidence to indicate that certain minority groups are experiencing significant disparities in their opportunities to do business in the private sector where there are no HUB goals.

Several focus groups were conducted with local business owners in Austin, both HUBs and non-HUBs in the construction-related industry. They were asked about their business experience. What's it like to do business in this community? HUB comments ranged from difficulty in obtaining private sector contracts to access to capital. Non-HUBs commented on the low availability of qualified HUBs and the need for more realistic HUB goals. "There is general community consensus here that fairness and equal opportunity are important goals for government agencies. It's not true everywhere. So it is refreshing that the prime contractors by and large supported the program," said Ms. Holt.

"There is general community consensus here that fairness and equal opportunity are important goals for government agencies. It's not true everywhere."



Colette Holt, Attorney
Colette Holt and Associates,
testifying before the commissioners court

One of the first recommendations Ms. Holt made was to survey HUB and non-HUB businesses on their business experiences with the County. This would provide anecdotal evidence in addition to statistical evidence that would help continue the HUB Program.

Continued development of the HUB Program will include creating a process if someone is discriminated against - so they know what to do and

who to speak with. There will also be a procedure to manage that complaint through to resolution.

Maintaining complete contract and vendor data on HUB and non-HUB subcontracting is an important part of the HUB Program. The

HUB staff will soon have software to track HUB and non-HUB participation. This will assist the staff to develop measures to determine the success of the program by tracking the number of contracts, the number of prime contracts, and subcontracting dollars.

Where does the HUB Program rank? "...I certainly think that [the program] gets an 'A' for improvement in the amount of resources and support given to the program, Ms. Holt stated. "When I first talked to you [the court] ... she [Sylvia Lopez, HUB Program Coordinator] didn't have near

enough resources to get the job done. That has changed a lot. Overall, the HUB firms thought that the County's program was better than some ...," commented Ms. Holt.

The Travis County Purchasing Office has won numerous awards for their efforts. Travis County was the first county to officially adopt a HUB Program and continually seeks ways to improve the effectiveness of the program. The office is frequently contacted by other counties seeking advice and guidance on implementing a successful and workable program.



In The Spotlight, continued from page 1

when she hears about the good things contractors are providing. The contracts provide for such services as child care, workforce development, basic needs for children and even a small graduation gift for a foster child.

She enjoys her work and the people in the Purchasing Office. She takes ownership of her work and sees her future growing with Travis County. Currently,

she is working on her Bachelor degree in Business from Texas State University in Round Rock. The call to service also goes to her husband, James as he pursues a degree in nursing.

The two enjoy quiet time in their new home in Leander with two Boston Terriers, Dixie and Lola. There are a lot of people who have benefited from Rebecca's heart. Travis County is just a few of them.

SOMEWHERE-SOMETIME

Some where some time our destiny unfolds
For all the world our actions to behold
Will they open to all our commitment to help
Someone other in need than our self
The bells of goodness pealing their chimes
Bringing joy to all no matter the climes
For in us all their music runs sweet
As we daily go on with the beat
Some where some time we'll strike the note
The perfect tune that brings us hope

© Donald E. Rollack
June 13, 2006

Proper Planning, Participation and Protection for Purchasing

As a purchasing liaison, you are a vital link in the purchasing cycle. You can make the cycle more efficient by assisting in the proper planning, participation and protection for purchasing.

The first step in making a purchase is to analyze your need. Do you have the funding to make this purchase? Are there any restrictions to making the purchase? Do you understand the minimum needs of the end-user?

After you have thoroughly determined the need for the purchase, specifications need to be written.

1. Determine that your specifications have full and open competition.
2. State the minimum needs.
3. Make sure specifications are not too restrictive.
4. Identify any unique clauses that could affect the specification language.

Next, you need to establish evaluation criteria. Consider all factors that will be used in evaluation as well as the importance of each factor. Factors such as, cost, quality, non-cost evaluation factors, and past performance can be used as an evaluation criteria. Rank the order of importance of the assigned criteria.



Lastly, describe the services or actions to be performed. With commodities this includes a description of the item and quantities. Include special interest

items or constraints. When writing a description, you may want to consider consulting with technical experts.

With proper planning and participation by subject matter experts, we can prevent litigation,

ensure that procedures are followed, and that there is impartiality. You cannot prevent litigation or risk, but you can always greatly reduce it by involving other parties.

Thus we end with protection. When needs are properly established, we protect the county from litigation (bid protest). Even if a bid protest happens, the county can learn and prevent another from occurring.

Thank you again for your help in the purchasing process. The Purchasing Office is always available to help you.



The above article contains excerpts from Government Procurement magazine, Feb. 2006 issue, "The Three Ps of Procurement" by Michael A. Hordell and Sean P. Bamford

Payment Card Program for Travis County?

Greater accountability is in higher demand. By implementing the right payment card solution, more accountability and better transparency can be achieved. Better management of the complete spectrum of ordering and payment processes creates more efficiency. Other benefits are lower administrative cost, increased productivity, stronger financial controls, and enhanced constituent services.

Based on research from the Eastern Illinois University and Washington University in St. Louis, organizations can save \$69 per transaction versus paper-based processes by cutting procurement cycle times, and freeing up administration time. It can aid in regulatory compliance issues such as procuring from small, and minority-owned businesses. It can track dollars spent with HUB businesses to assist in data gathering. When purchases are completed, all transaction details are cap-



tured at the point of sale and sent back to the organization electronically for automatic reconciliation. Vendors are paid within 48 hours instead of 30 - 45 days.

This can aid the organization to negotiate better pricing or discounts, thus saving more money. Organizations can track card usage online and gain valuable insight into where every dollar is spent, on what and by whom. Rules can be enforced by payment cards being used for approved vendors/suppliers and not to exceed per transaction spending limits. Auditors can detect and respond to irregular activity in a timely fashion instead of months later when paper reconciliation and audits are performed.

The payment card is a powerful, highly effective tool to facilitate more open, transparent and cost-effective administration of public finances.

Travis County is considering implementing a procurement card program. The above article contains excerpts from Government Procurement magazine, Feb. 2006 issue, "Payment Card Programs Support Transparent Fiscal Management" by Eva M. Robinson



Quote of the Day

"I would rather have a mind opened by wonder than closed by belief"

- Gerry Spence (1929 -)
Trial Lawyer and author

Special Events Calendar

Texas Lottery Commission Annual Historically Underutilized Business Forum

July 20, 2006

1:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Location: 611 East 6th Street
Austin, TX

Contact

Joyce Bertolacini,
HUB Coordinator
(512) 344-5293

or

joyce.bertolacini@lottery.state.tx.us

TBPC/HUB PROCURE- MENT SEMINAR & BUYER CONNECTION

July 25, 2006

ERS Building
18th & Brazos
Austin, TX

8:00am - 3:30pm

To register call
512-463-6958 or 512-463-5077

Central Texas Business Procurement Conference & Exposition

August 1, 2006

Wingate Inn's
Williamson Conference Center
Round Rock, TX
8:00 am - 3:30 pm

for more information
<http://www.txstatesbdc.com>, or
call (512) 716-4800

Top Ten Purchasing Bloopers



10. Ordering boiler chemicals piecemeal every few months rather than doing a long term boiler servicing contract which includes chemicals, cleaning, disposal, and boiler performance!

9. Purchasing a large piece of heavy laboratory equipment without taking into account the floor's load bearing ability. Result: Relocation of the lab.

8. After insisting that the contractor not deliver ground cover pre-sewn into large rolls, the bidder responded that after examining it, they found it would be impossible to find a truck to accommodate the pre-sewn pieces.

7. Because liquidated damages were not specified in the event items were not delivered via winter roads before spring thaw, barrels of oil had to be flown in on small planes for next year's heating requirements.

6. Delivery restrictions to an 18-floor complex were not identified prior to delivery of over 100 large wooden wardrobes which resulted in the wardrobes having to be uncrated and taken up the stairs to each floor because they couldn't fit in the elevators!

5. A large piece of equipment was ordered and delivered without defining maximum equipment dimensions. Result: broken walls since the equipment didn't fit through hallways.

4. Not taking into account seasonal changes and their impact on delivery routes resulted in a contractor dropping off a pre-fab unit on an island in the middle of a frozen lake when the road started to crack under the weight. Upon return the next winter, the contractor found the unit had sunk four feet into bog during the warmer weather then became frozen in place yet again by their return.

3. Not paying attention to rural roads, bridges, and tight corners when delivering a pre-fab unit resulted in the structure getting stuck on the bridge (damaging one corner of the unit), and getting stuck again on the other side.

2. A prison was unable to get successful delivery by a concrete truck because a) they failed to take into account the dimensions of the delivery area and b) on another occurrence, did not coordinate with the timing of the prison work detail which requires all prison activity to stop.

1. A fire truck being ordered without taking into account the dimensions of the station entrance way. Result: the fire truck didn't fit in the station!

Source: NIGP BuyWeekly, 4-26-06

**Lessons learned;
measure twice, order once!**

NOTEWORTHY...

Welcome

"Vic" Chanmugam joined the Purchasing Office on May 30th as a Purchasing Agent Assistant. He comes to us from the City of Austin, where he was their Chief Technology buyer for the last fifteen years.

Welcome and
Good Luck!



The Purchasing Office continues to save using rfpdepot.com. For the third quarter (April - June) \$45,073 dollars were saved. The dollars saved is based on budgeted amount versus actual dollars spent. The dollars saved in the first full 12 months was \$129,880. Keep reminding vendors to register at www.rfpdepot.com It's easy, it's quick and it's free!

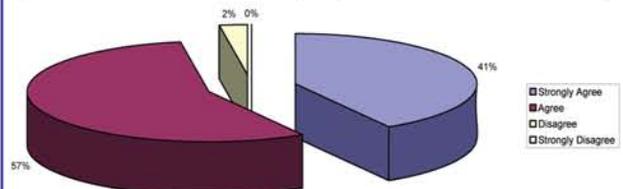
Info for Liaisons

Remember to save the date! August 17, 2006 for the Purchasing Liaison Appreciation Workshop. Check with the Purchasing Office for more information

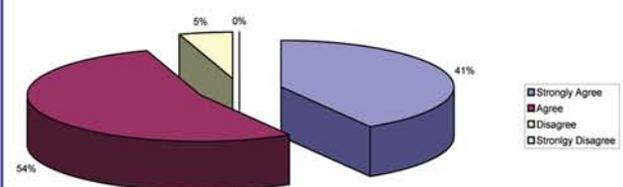
The Purchasing Office is a member of BuyBoard™. BuyBoard™ offers a variety of commodities and products from audiovisual to water treatment supplies and equipment. Visit the Purchasing Office intranet site to learn more of what can be purchased or contact us at 854-9700.

2006 Purchasing Office Annual Survey Results

Overall I am satisfied with the quality of service I receive from the Purchasing Office. (98%)



I believe that the Purchasing Office adds value to the goods and services required by the County. (95%)



Special Information

Travis County
Purchasing Quarterly

Supplement to the Summer 2006 Issue

STAR Flight Takes Delivery of New Aircraft

By Casey Ping

In 2003 STAR Flight was asked to forecast the strategic and budgetary issues that would be facing the program in the next 5 years. Included in this list were;

1. Upcoming maintenance requirements for the current EC135. Starting as soon as 2007 both of the EC135's were going to require scheduled maintenance/overhaul of the engines and transmissions. This would have required rental components during the overhauls and would be a significant cost to Travis County. Coupled with some ongoing maintenance issues, this resulted in significant upcoming and continuing maintenance expenses.
2. Future Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)/National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations/requirements for medical helicopters. Based upon the current and evolving accident rate among EMS helicopters, we felt there was significant potential for the FAA to increase the equipment/training requirements for EMS Helicopter Operations. Equipment being discussed was night vision goggles (NVG's), instrument flight rule certifications (IFR), terrain avoidance equipment, cockpit and data recorders and auto pilots
3. Seton Hospital and St. David's Hospital were in discussion with STAR Flight management about their future patient transport needs. This included the ability to conduct neonatal and high risk obstetrical transports. While these missions could and have been done in the EC135, it was not ideal and did not meet the preferred configurations for the hospitals. Additionally, Brackenridge Hospital is developing a relationship with University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston that may require moving patients more frequently to Galveston.

We began to explore what options we had with current aircraft while



managing on going cost. The EC135 met our expectations and performed well but it was clear if the things listed above were going to occur the EC135 would not continue to meet our needs. After several discussions with Travis County Commissioners Court they approved the release of a request for proposal (RFP) to replace the aircraft. Considering everything above and changes/upgrades that had been discussed over the history of the EC135, specifications were written and an

RFP was released. Two manufactures responded to the RFP including Bell Helicopter (Bell 430) and American Eurocopter (EC145). After extensive review and negotiations including evaluating the aircraft, mission requirements, delivery schedule, price and other factors, the EC145 was selected. In July 2005 a contract was signed and aircraft were ordered. The aircraft is assembled in Germany, taken apart and sent to the US. Metro Aviation in Shreveport, LA was subcontracted to complete the interior of the aircraft. Quite a process if you have never experienced it. Over the next 6 months the aircraft was rewired, components developed, certified, installed and the aircraft painted. During this 6 months STAR Flight crews made 6 trips to Shreveport to discuss, develop, inspect and approve of the concepts and work completed by Metro.



Travis County took delivery of the first aircraft in mid-February and the second aircraft in mid-March. After completion of pilot, mechanic, and crew training, both aircraft were placed into service in mid-April.

We look forward to bringing it to a scene or hospital near you soon.



Be not slow to visit the sick.

Ecclesiastes