



Summer 2007
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Purchasing Agent

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Pct. 1 Commissioner Ron Davis
Pct. 2 Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt
Pct. 3 Commissioner Gerald Daugherty
Pct. 4 Commissioner Margaret Gómez

Travis County
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261st District Ct. Judge Lora Livingston
250st District Ct. Judge John K. Dietz
County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe
Pct. 3 Cnty Commissioner Gerald Daugherty

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Travis County Purchasing Quarterly

In the Spotlight Jorge Talavera



"We work and live in the greatest city in Texas, maybe the country," says Jorge Talavera, CPPB, Construction and Architecture/Engineering Services Purchaser. A native of Uvalde, Texas, Jorge is proud to have called Austin home for the last 13 years. It was 1992 when visiting his brother, who was attending the University of Texas at the time, that he first "experienced Austin and fell in love with the place. The famous city skyline, tree covered hills...Town Lake (now Lady Bird Lake.) Who wouldn't love it here?"

After graduating from high school, Jorge, known as "JT" to friends and family, followed his older brother Rick's footsteps by attending UT, graduating in 1999. The youngest of three siblings, with one older sister and brother, his parents "worked hard and stressed the value of getting an education." As a result, all

three graduated from college - something his father, Richard, who continues to work in the trucking industry, is most proud of. His mother, Martha, who Jorge says, has "had a hand in caring for and raising many of the children in the Talavera family" as an "extended family grandma," is retired. "I'm very proud of what my parents were able to do despite their economic circumstances. It took a

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Jail Time!! Who Me??

By Jerome T. Guerrero

Did you know that there are criminal penalties for violating the Purchasing Act? The law in part states, "A county officer or employee commits an offense if the officer or employee intentionally or knowingly makes or authorizes purchases to avoid the competitive bidding requirements. An offense could result in Class B or Class C misdemeanor. If convicted, an employee faces immediate removal from office or employment for 4 years after the date of the final conviction." If convicted, they could face up to one year in jail and a fine.



The key players in the purchasing process are the purchasing agent, auditor, county attorney, commissioners court and you, the end user. Together, these offices are responsible for the requisition, purchase, receipt, monitoring,

safeguarding and payment of goods and services used by Travis County to perform its mandated functions. Each office has statutorily defined roles that provide the taxpayer with a system of checks and balances. The Purchasing Office has staff to assist you with the most efficient and cost effective method to purchase your requests. There are many county contracts, purchasing co-ops and other competitive procedures to purchase commodities and services.

Before you call the vendor, call the Purchasing Office. There have been several newspaper stories lately of decisions that were not made in the best interest of the public or the official acting on behalf of

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HB2918 Eliminates Catalog Information System Vendor (CISV) Program

By Jerome T. Guerrero

Effective September 1, 2007, House Bill 2918 will end the CISV program that many agencies and government purchasers have been using for years. The bill will also "transfer from Texas Building and Procurement Commission (TBPC) to Department of Information Resources (DIR), the technology aspect of the Texas Multiple Award Schedule (TxMAS) program.

What will this mean to Travis County's purchases of computer hardware and software? Instead of browsing through multiple catalog vendors and negotiating a price, Travis County can purchase directly from an existing contract. Negotiations are still an option, especially with the hardware contracts based on the volume of the purchase. As always,



the Purchasing Office will work with you and our Information Technology (IT) Department to efficiently and competitively purchase your IT systems.

The DIR contracts will most likely be able to meet our current requirements. There will be an occasional item that we might have to compete ourselves. We can also look to other cooperative arrangements for IT products/services.

The Purchasing Office is in direct communication with DIR about county concerns and needs. As always, contact the Purchasing Office about your departments upcoming IT requirements.

Legislative Updates

Staff Contribution

The Texas Legislature comes to town every two years but the effects linger beyond anyone's imagination. For the next two years, we will live and work with these latest changes. What impact did the 80th Texas Legislature leave?

One positive bill, HB 3517, now gives the Purchasing Agent and Commissioners Court the authority to use a competitive sealed proposal for goods and services to determine "best value". This will allow for negotiations and evaluation factors to determine what is the best, most cost effective solution for Travis County. This bill also amended section 262.030, by adding vehicle and equipment repairs, as an item that can be exempted from competitive bidding.

Another positive bill, HB 2462, now allows us (law enforcement) to sell certain seized gambling equipment in coordination with the State. Over the past several years this has been a warehousing and disposal nightmare.

Another big bill for Counties was HB 1886. This bill creates a design-build process for civil works such as roads and bridges. This adds to our current authority under Chapter 271, which al-



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lot of sacrifice and love...we owe them a lot."

In December 2000, Jorge took on a new position in HUB Program in the Purchasing Office. After three years, Jorge was promoted to Purchaser and over that last four years has purchased in the areas of commodities, information technology, professional services and construction.

Jorge prides himself on his integrity, respect and tolerance for others and his willingness to openly share advice or help, often collaborating with fellow buyers and departments to find solu-

tions and get the job done.

In his downtime, Jorge is a husband to his wife, Brenda, and "Daddy" to his 9-year-old daughter, Analysa - his "pride and joy." He is also an "off-road" triathlete with a love for the outdoors; trail running, mountain biking and swimming as often as he can. "There's nothing I love more than biking on the Greenbelt then taking a cold dip in Barton Springs... that's good living!"

"... you have to savor the journey because you never know how long it will last."

Vendor Tracking System (VTS) Continues Implementation

By Jerome T. Guerrero

HUB Staff continues to use the Vendor Tracking System (VTS) to track HUB subcontractor utilization. Over 200 contracts have been loaded into the system, allowing the creation of various reports on construction and professional services subcontractor usage.

Currently, the HUB team is working on contract language to notify contractors and subcontractors that they are required to enter data into the system. At pre-bid conferences, the HUB Program Specialists are notifying potential bidders and attendees about the system.

The system will be implemented immediately on the Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC) Design-Build Project in Del Valle. The prime contractor, FaulknerUSA will be working with the HUB Team to track their utilization of HUB subcontractors for this \$65,000,000 project.



The HUB staff will work with FaulknerUSA and their subcontractors to teach and use VTS.

The system will track vendor (prime and subcontractor) payments by each vendor entering and electronically confirming receipt of payment. The data will aid the county in gathering information about payment history and improve communication between prime contractors and subcontractors.

The system will offer a public vendor search directory. The directory will be available to prime vendors to assist them in finding potential HUB subcontractors and subconsultants. Vendors can search the directory by using keywords such as "concrete", "painters" or "architects." Also, non-construction vendors can search for potential HUB subconsultants. This will replace the Specialized Listings that the HUB Program posts on the Purchasing Office web site.

Legislative Updates

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allows us to use design-build in facilities construction. The bill is complicated and has very specific rules to follow. It will take us time to learn the new rules and try this new method of procuring construction projects.

There were several bills this session that clarified and defined the Public Information Act. We have deadlines to respond to open records request of which each office should be aware. The County Attorney's Office will assist you in your responses to these requests.

There were also several bills dealing with Texas Ethics Commission Rules. Last session a bill was passed that required contractors who were even thinking about doing businesses with counties to complete a Conflict of Interest Questionnaire, which had deadlines and filing requirements. This session, they tried to clarify the intent of that bill. Travis County has its own Ethics Policy in addition to the States Ethics Rules. Be aware!

Another big change at the state is HB 3560, which eliminates the Texas Building & Procurement Commission. This bill splits the commis-

sion into the Texas Facilities Commission (state buildings, leasing and maintenance) with statewide purchases and the state HUB Program going under the authority of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA). State agencies must establish HUB goals and the State Auditors Office (SAO) must consider if HUB goals were met to determine an agency's performance before allocating budget. HUB performance will be a key measure in the appropriation process.

Adding to the Comptroller's responsibilities is HB 3420 in which the Comptroller must create a public, searchable database of state agency expenditures. "With HB 3420, citizens will be able to conduct their own research and hold government accountable in ways that were not possible before," said State Representative Mark Strama, sponsor of the bill.

There were over 1,400 bills passed this 80th Legislative Session. The Purchasing Office will do its best to ensure that we comply with all that apply to the Procurement function. Call the office at 854-9700.

Quote of the Day

Never discourage anyone who continually makes progress, no matter how slow.

Plato
Greek author & philosopher

Special Events Calendar

09/04 - 09/07 - Austin
American Contract Compliance Association (ACCA) 2007 National Training Institute
Address: Hilton Hotel 500 East 4th Street Austin, TX
Information: Hosted by the City of Austin, Austin Energy and American Contract Compliance Association (ACCA)
Contact: For more information please visit: www.acca298.org

09/17/07 - Austin
City of Austin Information Technology Business Development Conference and Expo
UT Commons Conference Center at J.J. Pickle Research Campus, Austin
Contact: www.business.txstate.edu/conference.
Register on-line http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/it_expo/registration.cfm

Special Announcement

After 6 years a new look is coming to the Purchasing Quarterly. Starting in Winter 2007 issue, the newsletter will have a new design. Tell us what you think.

Editor

HUB Program Highlights

By Betty Chapa

The months of May and June were a busy time for the HUB staff as they attended various forums and expos. Betty Chapa and Jerome Guerrero, HUB Program Specialists represented Travis County at the Texas State University Small Business Development Center's "Texas Business to Government Procurement Conference" (TxB2G '07) where Dawnna Dukes, Texas State Representative, 46th District of Texas, was the guest speaker. Not only was the event successful, a partnership with Texas State's HUB Office was made and packets are now sent to their office for potential vendors interested in doing business with Travis County. Travis County always encourages partnerships to promote outreach initiatives.

Sylvia Lopez, HUB Program Coordinator was invited by the Community Mentor Protégé Initiative (CMPI) to attend "The Power of Mentoring" a Mentor-Protégé Summit in St. Louis, Missouri, held on June 7-8, 2007. The purpose of the summit was to visit a local St. Louis high school that implemented a mentor pilot program to young people interested in the construction field. Sylvia is



Arch in St. Louis, Missouri



a board member for CMPI and attended the event representing Travis County. She provided the attendees, most of who were with various Associated General Contractors (AGC) chapters and school districts

with a presentation titled "How to do Business with Travis County."

Betty Chapa, working with the HUB Discussion Workgroup (HDWG) sub-committee, completed the HUB Program Coordinators manual for the State of Texas. This will provide new HUB Coordinators with a base guideline of procedures and rules on implementing HUB Programs.

JAIL TIME!! WHO ME??

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the government body they were representing.

In Webb County, a former commissioner was convicted and is serving jail time for charges of bribery and vote-selling surrounding the construction of a jail in Willacy County in 2006. More recent stories include the highly publicized arrest of the Cameron County Auditor for allegedly circumventing the competitive bidding process by awarding an insurance contract without commissioners court approval. Recently a former director for a city program was accused of giving city contracts to a friend. He was not indicted but was terminated for failure to disclose his relationship with the friend who was awarded a city contract.

Always work within the procedures and guidelines established by the Purchasing Office to protect the public employee and to insure that taxpayer money is spent in a competitive environment. Work with the Purchasing Office.

Rule of Thumb: Only the Purchasing Agent is authorized to purchase on behalf of the County. When in doubt, call the Purchasing Office at 854-9700 or visit the County intranet to view the Procedures Manual.

Is It You?

When times are hard and trying
And peace seems to be dying
When life's sea becomes a roaring gale
A ship-tossed on waves without a sail
But like a balm comes a friend so true
To still the wind with skies of blue
The boundless aid without a due
I always ask-is it you?



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August 8, 2007

NOTEWORTHY...

Congratulations!

To Jorge Talavera, Purchasing Agent Assistant IV is the latest recipient of the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification conferred by the Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council (UPPCC). This prestigious designation is an outstanding honor for individuals in the public profession and an asset to the Travis County Purchasing Office

Great Job!

Farewell

We are sad to say goodbye to Jessica Mendoza, Purchasing Support Specialist. We will miss her smiling face and sweet personality. She is leaving the Purchasing Office to go to the Elgin school district. She served Travis County for over 8 years and was in the Purchasing Office 2 years. We'll miss you and good luck with your new endeavor!



Savings from rfpdepot continues to add-up. The third quarter (April-June) savings was \$159,885.52. The dollars saved is based on budgeted amount, \$871,966.00 versus actual dollars spent, \$712,080.48. Encourage vendors to register at www.rfpdepot.com It's easy, it's quick and it's free!