



Purchasing Quarterly

Fall 2011, Volume 11, Issue 4 A Publication of the Travis County Purchasing Office, Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., Purchasing Agent

Plan Early, Plan Often, Plan Ahead (Please)

Staff Contribution

Make a note on your 2012 calendars. February and March will be busy months leading up to the April 2012 **Go Live** date for the new financial system known as BEFIT or SAP. In those few short months, training and conversion activities will begin that will impact procurement activities. That's why we are asking that offices and departments take some additional time now to think about planning their calendar 2012 purchases.

What we know. February and March 2012 will be especially busy with conversion, user acceptance testing, and training activities. All County finance and procurement staff (including Purchasing) will be trained on the new system during the 6-week period from mid-February to the end of March. During that same time, we want to close-out requisitions in process (i.e. change them to contracts or Purchase Orders) before the end of March, so that they may be converted to SAP. Certain deadlines must be met to do this:

- **March 1, 2012:** Deadline for **department-approved** routine, open market requisitions (<\$50,000) to be submitted to Purchasing. *Note: requisition access will not be shut down at this time; this deadline is to ensure sufficient time to process the requisition into a Purchase Order so that it does not need to be re-entered in SAP after go-live.
- **March 21, 2012:** Deadline for **department-approved**, contract requisitions to be submitted to Purchasing. *Note: requisition access will be shut down on this date.
- **March 23, 2012:** Deadline for all departmental payment requests/invoices to be submitted to the Auditor's Office as well as goods receipt.



Important Reminder. Even though the calendar may look similar, this is not year-end when budget lapses and must be re-appropriated. **Your budget will be converted to the new system**, so please do not create any requisitions for this purpose.

What happens next. On March 23, 2012 (after 5pm), H.T.E. access will be closed to offices/departments to process final payments and prepare for conversion. Conversion occurs during the weekend with the completion of SAP Go-Live. On April 2, 2012, office/

department staff may enter financial and procurement transactions in SAP!

What we are asking you to do. Plan and take action now. If you already know you will need a time sensitive, large dollar, or complex procurement, we ask that you discuss your future needs with this office ASAP.

Adhere to the published deadlines for requisitions and goods receipt. We know that emergencies may occur – and we will be here to help you, but for routine items – please don't wait until the last minute. If you miss the deadlines and the items are not converted, you will need to re-enter these requisitions as SAP "shopping carts".

Be patient and understand that there will be some slowdowns as staff goes to required training and works on conversion activities. That said, we want to work with you to minimize any unnecessary impacts and disruptions. It will take all of us working together as a team to ensure a successful transition.

Please contact the Purchasing Office at (512) 854-9700 now so that we can work together to schedule your future purchases. As they say on TV, operators are standing by!

Go to page 4 for the latest BEFIT update.

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700 Lavaca Building Renovations

County Staff Contribution

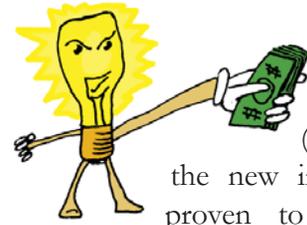
Travis County was a recipient of \$2,207,900 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through the United States Department of Energy (DOE) for investing in energy conservation upgrades to existing or newly constructed buildings

On April 20, 2010, the Commissioners Court unanimously voted to purchase the 700 Lavaca Building located in downtown Austin, Texas, which was the first step in relieving the current space deficiency with a growing population.

Through the DOE grant funds, improvements and renovations have been made to the 700 Lavaca building. The County replaced the glazing on the tower floors, 3-15, with Low Emission, Higher Efficiency, Low Solar Heat Gain double insulated glass. The relative improvement over the existing glass is an approximate 25 percent reduction in solar heat gain and similar reduction in losses of internal conditioned air, both from the glass improvement and from the replacement of associated gaskets and caulking.

Another improvement was the replacement of existing chilled water cooling coils and insulation lining on all air handling units with higher efficiency coils. This made a relative improvement of approximately 5 percent over the original units. This improvement reduced the overall cost of cooling by providing more efficient chilled water to air cooling transfer, resulting in lower volumes of air required to be cycled through the units, translating into reduced fan speeds and loads which lower electricity usage.

The air conditioning systems controls were converted from



pneumatic controls to direct digital controls (DDC) which is the new industry standard proven to provide better control and accountability, resulting in lower heating and cooling cost.

Air handler motors were replaced with high efficiency motors. Chilled water bypass valves were replaced with more efficient valves to reduce wasted energy in the chilled water circulation loop system. Condensing water bypass valves were installed at the cooling tower to reduce waste energy circulating cooling tower water when demand is low. Other improvements were made to the chilled water system and air handling system to reduce electrical demand by removing defunct components and or replacing aging components with new state of the art components.

Upgrades were made to the roof insulation with a roof reflective membrane to reduce heat gain into the building and to reduce what is called the "heat island effect" in inner cities due to the typical concentration of darker roofing materials holding and radiating heat to surrounding buildings.

Many of the interior space lighting fixtures were replaced with LED (Light Emitting Diode) Lights which is currently the most energy efficient commercially available fixture. There has been a reduction in the number of fixtures required to light comparable square footages and a significant reduction in energy consumption for the same levels of lighting.

The County has made a great investment and is committed to making this building a quality County building for staff and the public. Ω

The HUB Program Working for You

Staff Contribution

The Travis County HUB program was unanimously approved by the Commissioners Court in 1994. Since then, over \$197,000,000 has been awarded to certified minority and woman-owned prime contractors and subcontractors. The HUB Program started with a part-time position and today is staffed by three full-time employees.

Selling to any government entity can be an intimidating process especially to a small start-up business. HUB staff offers guidance and business coaching to all types of businesses on the purchasing process. Additionally, the HUB and buying staff work internally with other County departments to inform them of the availability of such businesses.

The City of Austin and the

State of Texas have been partners with the County since 1994 to encourage vendors to get certified, and to educate businesses on the benefits certification offers. Travis County recognizes the certifications of the City of Austin, State of Texas and the Texas Unified Certification Program and enlisted in 1994 a “Good Faith Effort” approach for woman and minority-owned business participation on County contracts and subcontracts.

The HUB staff continuously reaches out to HUB’s through a combination of efforts, with the most successful being the ongoing support through attendance at various vendor fairs, networking meetings and roundtable

discussions. Additionally, HUB staff is continually building relationships with local construction trade organizations, chambers of commerce, prime contractors and County internal staff.

Although HUB inclusion has been generally successful given the inherent constraints of a voluntary approach, the first step any business should take is to register to do business with the County at www.bidsync.com. Opportunities will automatically be e-mailed to vendors ready, willing and able to provide a product or service. Vendor registration, followed by HUB, MBE, WBE, DBE certification, will get the wheels moving on “leveling the playing field” for the participation of minority and woman-owned businesses in County contracting activities.

Contact the County’s HUB program staff to learn more about opportunities with the County and other government entities at 512-854-9700. Ω



(L to R) Jerome T. Guerrero, HUB Program Specialist, Richard Villareal, Purchasing Agent Assistant, Felix Batchassi of IT Solutions on Demand



2011 Purchasing Liaison Appreciation Workshop

The Purchasing Office hosted its annual Liaison Appreciation Workshop on August 25, 2011. Over 35 liaisons attended to learn more about what is new and reconnect with the Office staff.

Donna Scarbrough with the Better Enterprise Financial Information for Travis County (BEFIT) Project provided an update on implementation and progress of the project. Additionally, representatives from the Auditor’s Office introduced themselves and gave brief overviews of their policies and procedures.

All Purchasing Liaisons are encouraged to participate in future workshops because vital information is provided to help each liaison with their job. Contact us if you ever have any questions or problems at 512-854-9700. Ω



Coming Soon to Purchasing Computer Screens Near You: The BEFIT Project Update

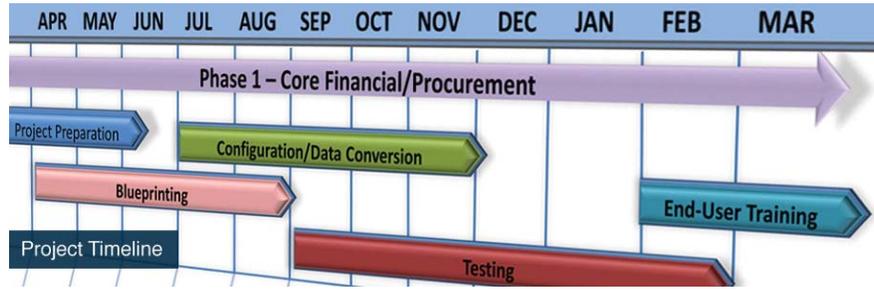
By Donna Scarbrough

Springtime is just around the corner and that means the arrival of the BEFIT Project Procurement module. BEFIT – Better Enterprise Financial Information for Travis

County – is shorthand for the new financial system that will transform County finance, procurement, payroll and human resources (HR) functions. Here’s an update on the key functionality that will be gained on the Purchasing end with the conversion to the new software from the firm SAP:

- Easy to “shop” – look/feel of ordering online from retailers.
- Less data entry for Catalog purchases – much of the information fills in by default.
- Key word search to assist you in finding items on Catalog or selecting the right Product Category - typing in “television” instead of a numeric commodity code.
- Catalogs (internal and punch-out to a vendor website) will be loaded/visible to shoppers.
- Catalog POs process quicker - sent directly to vendor, not to Purchasing to send to vendor.
- Can combine items for multiple vendors in one shopping cart – if they are Catalog items, multiple Purchase Orders are generated and sent to different vendors.
- Approval history – you can see the status of your Shopping Cart/Purchase Order, where it is and who still needs to approve it.
- Product Category and GL account for “Shipping” to reduce corrections that occur today.
- Ability to flag purchases that are improvements to an existing asset.

What is the timing on all of this? Procurement end user training will begin in February 2012, two months before the projected April 2012 “Go-Live” date. Training is intentionally scheduled “just-in-time” so that you retain what you’ve learned for use when we “Go-Live” with the Procurement module.



Is the project proceeding on schedule? BEFIT recently achieved some major milestones. Project Blueprint was checked off as complete in September. That consisted of a series of

design workshops conducted by the county’s implementation services vendor, LSI. The County gathered information necessary to define its to be business processes and began to identify the configuration and technical development required to meet the County’s business needs. Blueprint was quickly followed up by the Playback stage. The BEFIT team and blueprint workshop participants met again to confirm the requirements and business process flows that came out during the Blueprint sessions. The results of that process are the Process Design Documents, the building blocks for the SAP system.

So what’s next? With Blueprint and Playback completed, the next stage is called Realization. If you think of the Blueprint and Playback as a sprint, then compare the

Realization stage to a marathon. Among the activities:

- We customize the system for Travis County use by entering SAP configuration settings and adding fields/programs through user exits.
- We build technical development items known as WRICEF (Workflow, Reports, Interfaces, Conversions, Enhancements, and Forms) that support customization.
- We test the configuration settings and

WRICEF items several times and at different levels to make sure they work as designed by Travis County. In purchasing, it would follow an item that is purchased, received, invoiced, and paid.

- We prepare the final plan for cutover to SAP including data conversion steps and final checks and approvals for entering live data.

- We decide to proceed with go-live in April, 2012, based on a review of the testing results, organizational and training readiness assessments.



Special Information



Purchasing Quarterly

Supplement to the Fall 2011 Issue

Travis County CMAR Project

Staff Contribution

The Travis County Purchasing staff and Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program team, in partnership with FLINTCO, the Construction Manager-at-Risk (CMAR) for the Travis County Commissioners Courtroom Renovation Project, hosted the first HUB Mixer on October 19, 2011, on the first floor of the 700 Lavaca building. Over 90 businesses attended to meet key personnel with FLINTCO and Travis County. This is the first CMAR project for Travis County.

In July 2010, Travis County purchased the 15 story office building located at 700 Lavaca in downtown Austin, Texas. The building is to be the new site for the Commissioners Courtroom and offices for the County Judge and Commissioners. Several County administrative departments have already relocated to 700 Lavaca.

The project will be divided up into several "construction packages" for potential subcontractors to submit their bids and qualifications to the CMAR. The HUB Program staff will be using the Vendor



Tracking Systems (VTS) to monitor and verify payments to HUB and non-HUB subcontractors.

The Commissioners Courtroom will be located on the first floor in the

former banking lobby space which has 25 foot ceilings. The remaining space of the first floor will be used for related support



spaces, such as a 3,600 square-foot multi-purpose meeting rooms and the County Treasurer's Office. The second floor will house the County Judge's office suite and three of the four Commissioners office suites.

Additional shelled space will be constructed for future offices.