

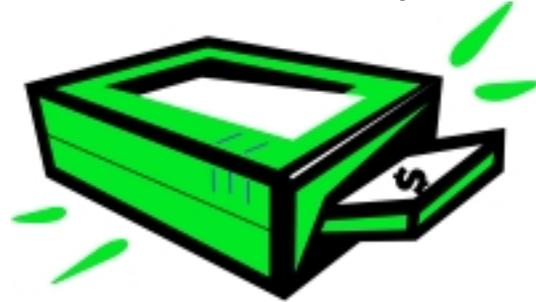
PURCHASING POWER

A publication of DAS Procurement Services

GOOD STUFF CHEAP ● Vol. II, No. 7

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THINK INK!



Put your printing nightmares to bed. Quality printers with quality services are at your fingertips.

DAS has put it in ink. The new \$8.3 million printer contract is up and ready to be used by agencies, municipalities, towns, and political subdivisions.

“This contract is the only one of its kind in the country,” said Joe Giliberto of Procurement Services. The uniqueness comes from the sensitivity and attention paid to Connecticut certified small and minority-owned businesses. This three-year multiple vendor multiple product contract utilizes 100 percent Connecticut certified small and minority-owned businesses exclusively.

The printer contract was up and running on August 2. This innovative contract was the outcome of working together in a team environment – namely one Purchasing person and one MIS person from DOT, DOC, DEP, Workers’ Compensation, DOIT, DOL, DSS, and DAS.

“Every team member evaluated the RFPs and weighed everything from service agreements to product lines,” said Pamela Anderson of Procurement Services.

The contract offers a full line of products that will meet the needs of any user: Hewlett Packard, Xerox, Canon, Lexmark, and NEC. More

importantly, every company on the contract must make these products available through the Orderlink system.

“People can go on Orderlink and compare the options and services of each vendor. No one is locked into any particular vendor,” Giliberto said. “So far the feedback has been great.”

Yet another bonus is that the contract offers schools additional discounts.

“It was stipulated that vendors have to offer schools discounted packages. The schools were anxious for this contract to be in place,” said Anderson. “I believe everyone is happy to have this contract up and running.” **S**

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PENNY WISE

Our greatest asset We've come a long way, baby. Now at DAS, it's all about the customer.

During the last several years, Procurement Services has changed and revised many of its practices and policies. This has been particularly noticeable in our use of technology and in our successful pursuit of legislative reform. We have attempted to keep the best of what worked and modify or discard what did not.

However, I think our biggest and most important change has been in the area of customer and supplier relations. Of course, these aspects of our business have always been important, but we view these relationships a little differently today. If you believe that public sector organizations exist for their customers (private sector groups are a trifle concerned about shareholders as well) then it is imperative that you know how those customers perceive your products (contracts) and services (customer support). Procurement Services structures its contracts and provides services based largely on feedback from its customers. We are active members in the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) and network regularly with other states' purchasing organizations and try to stay up-to-date regarding trends and developments in the procurement profession, but the major driver of our efforts is customer input.

Procurement participates in the annual DAS customer survey that measures overall level of customer satisfaction in several key areas. We regularly solicit customer input on a variety of topics and customers are always included in RFP evaluation teams – usually, and rightly so, outnumbering Procurement staff on these teams. We have posted Vendor Performance Forms on our website to facilitate the reporting of exemplary or problematic vendor performance by customers. Customers may also use the website to e-mail us on any subject using the “We Serve You” facility. We have conducted extremely successful courses in our Procurement Learning Center (PLC) program, held classes at Capital Community College, and are currently exploring

the possibility of a Procurement curriculum with Central Connecticut State University. Our “e-partners” are constantly making presentations and meeting with both existing and potential customers on not just Procurement, but all of DAS. The e-partners report back to us about what is happening out there in your world. We use this information to adapt and improve our products as part of our continuous improvement program. Finally, we have put a great deal of effort into the development of a database of customer contact information that currently contains over 1,400 individual contacts. At last, “we know who you are”!

By now, if you have read this far, you are wondering why I am run-

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\$UCCESS \$TORY

Good help is a lot easier to find

HELP is on the way and DAS has made it even easier to get it.

The latest Temporary Office Support contract provides access to a plethora of temporary help from clerical to technical – whatever offices need to get the job done.

In years past, there was a lengthy paper trail and approval process before a contract could be awarded.

“Previously, everything had to go out under a PSA. That meant one contract for each grouping of positions,” said Cindy Milardo of Procurement Services. “It was a very cumbersome process because every time someone needed to hire help that wasn’t on contract, an additional PSA had to be established. There was no way to add additional temp positions to existing contracts.”

Now all that has changed. There is no need to solicit a bid for additional services every time the need arises. Procurement Services has streamlined all PSAs into one contract to offer one-stop shopping for temporary help.

“We changed the language of the contract, giving the agencies the ability to request additional services under the contract. And if an office is happy with its temp, it may hire the individual without penalty or a finder’s fee as long as they give the temp agency 90 days from placement of the person,” Milardo explained.

The pot to pick from has grown substantially. The Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA), a group that promotes companies employing persons with disabilities, was added to the contract. Towns, cities, and political subdivisions have access to the contract, cutting their administrative costs while offering temp help at competitive rates. Many agencies that have purchasing autonomy have sought help

from the contract because it’s so easy to use.

“People who don’t necessarily have to use us are beginning to see the value in our contracts,” said Contract Specialist Tina Costanzo. It’s been helpful to state universities such as Eastern Connecticut,” she explained.

Eventually, Procurement Services hopes to offer temp services on the Connecticut e-commerce system, Orderlink.

“The contract will always evolve as we see needs change,” said Milardo. ■

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ning on about all this. Well, I guess it’s to prove the point that we really do value and actively solicit customer participation and feedback, and that we use this information to improve our operation. Given this, you have an obligation to provide that feedback; we need to hear your suggestions, comments, and complaints (ouch) and hopefully a compliment now and then. Don’t wait for us to come looking for you.

Finally, a few thoughts on supplier relations. Procurement regards suppliers as the key means of achieving customer satisfaction. Our job is to contract with suppliers providing high quality products and services that meet customer needs. If we do our job well, we will obtain that quality at attractive prices with contracts that offer choices and flexibility to our customers and are profitable and fair to our suppliers. You, customers and suppliers, can help us here as well. We welcome your suggestions for new contracts and your ideas for improving existing agreements.

OK enough of this. By the way, as this issue goes to press we will be conducting our first OrderLink Users meeting. This session provides an opportunity for users to hear about new enhancements, get additional training, meet with our Contract Specialists, and talk to our e-commerce partners from Digital Commerce Corporation. Hope you had an opportunity to attend this session, but we will be holding more meetings in the future on this subject. ■

Jim Passier

E-comm Connecticut

Because the OrderLink pilot has been such a success, starting November 1, 2000, all orders for purchases from contracts that are on OrderLink must be placed through this system. OrderLink will replace existing paper processes as well as vendor supplied ordering systems.

In order to prepare for this change, your agency should take the following steps:

*Designate your e-commerce coordinator and return this information to Julie Bernosky via fax at (860) 713-7484 if you have not yet done so.

*Provide Internet accessibility to your purchasing staff, requisitioners, and other appropriate staff members.

DAS will be there along the way to help you work through any glitches. Your help is appreciated in making a better, cheaper, quicker state purchasing system. **\$**



Just when you thought OrderLink couldn't get any better...

Believe it or not, it is getting better. Upcoming enhancements such as a new configurator, new approval process, overhauled order templates, and revamped user administration are sure to dazzle.

Purchasing just keeps getting easier. **\$**

DON'T FORGET PURCHASINGPOWER Online

Find your favorite articles or recent e-commerce news once featured in Purchasing Power on DAS Procurement Services' website (www.das.state.ct.us/busopp.htm) Select back issues of the *Purchasing Power* newsletter are available in

Adobe Acrobat format. **\$**

PC contract around the corner

What could be better than quality PCs available through OrderLink? A new PC contract could make that dream a reality. The State DAS will be pairing up with DOIT to get it done. **\$**



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