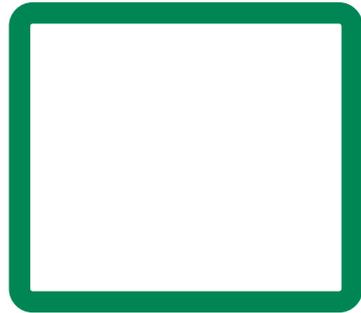


PURCHASING POWER

A publication of DAS Procurement Services

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From desktop to deal

With online bidding, you'll never miss out on an RFP again

"If you want something, ask for it."

So goes the simple yet time-proven philosophy that fueled DAS Procurement Services' new online bid registry. The State of Connecticut, after all, wants to purchase quality products at good prices from vendors who want to be informed of every state-issued request for proposals for which they are qualified to bid. So they're asking for it.

This new program could be the simplest most effective means of bringing the state and its suppliers together yet. And all they have to do is ask.

Here's how it works: Vendors go to the DAS Procurement web page at www.state.ct.us/das/Purchase/Register/default.asp and fill out an online registration form. On the form, the vendor is asked to give pertinent information about their company and check the commodity codes that match the products or services they are capable of providing the state. Once completed, the form can be easily emailed directly to Procurement Services.

In so doing, the vendor has, in effect, asked the state to consider buying its wares when shopping for products. By specifying which products and services the vendor feels it is equipped to furnish the state, that vendor has registered its presence and interest in any forthcoming bids or RFPs.

"We plan to discontinue sending unsolicited bid documents and contract award notices to vendors," says Jim Passier, manager of Procurement Services.

This registry then makes the state's quest for "good stuff cheap" far simpler, too. Now, when the time comes to purchase a commodity, DAS Procurement Services already has a list of potential suppliers. These prequalified vendors will receive an electronic bid notification via email, informing them that the state will soon be shopping for products in their line of business and inviting the vendor to submit a bid.

These bid notices are then stored on the site, enabling users to reference and search the database for all bids, a capability that was at the heart of the decision to move forward into online bidding. While DAS Procurement Services expects to greatly reduce administrative time and paperwork as well, the overwhelming plus is that searching for and learning about bid requests has just been made exponentially easier than under past paper-based methods.

As Procurement Services prepares to go paperless in 1999, advances such as this will continue to play a tremendous role in the effort to make state business transactions as user-friendly as possible. ■

In This Issue

Bidding Online

Your PC is now one of your most valuable sales tools

1

Penny Wise

Going paperless, Jim Passier discusses what you need to know

2

Success Story

Set-Aside bakery hits big, plus a letter from the editor

3

Money Clips

On the money info and other spare change

4



PENNY WISE

Procurement to Go Paperless

Are you prepared?

This time around, we're updating you on two major innovations that we're introducing in Procurement Services. The first - bid notification - deals with Internet-based notice to potential vendors of bids in their areas of interest, while the second explains our move to electronic notification and distribution of contract awards. Both of these subjects have been covered in past issues of *Purchasing Power*, but these changes affect profoundly the way we will do business together in the future. As a result, it is especially important that we visit these subjects regularly and that you understand what you need to do to prepare for these changes.

Let's deal with bid notification first. As mentioned in our lead article, we will discontinue sending unsolicited bid documents to potential vendors. In the past, this was done as a courtesy to notify suppliers that an invitation to bid had been posted. Our new system will send email notices to registered firms or individuals. Bidders can review a brief synopsis of the bid with the email, and - if interested - download the bid from the Internet. In the event they wish to bid, the supplier prints and completes the paper documents and mails them to Procurement. Registration is easy and fast and can be done from any Internet-connected PC. Simply go to www.state.ct.us/das/Purchase/Register/default.asp and follow the instructions. Check your email regularly for bid and addenda notices from Procurement. This change will take place on March 1, 1999. Not on the Internet yet? Don't worry, we will continue to advertise bids in major Connecticut daily newspapers in the legal notice sections.

OK, here's the second change. Beginning March 31, we will no longer distribute paper contract awards. Interested parties may register to receive contract award notices via email using a process very similar to the bid notice system just described. All contracts are kept online on our website and are available for viewing and/or downloading as needed. Customers may elect to download these documents to their own PCs or to browse our website when a specific need arises. As with the bid notification system, registration is easy and fast and can be done from any Internet-connected PC. The online contract notice registration will be available soon. Watch our website for an announcement explaining how to register.

You should note that both customers and suppliers can register for both bid and contract notification. The service, of course, is free. By the way, we will continue our current practice of sending paper contracts to awarded suppliers and may distribute some contracts in paper because of their size.

When you combine these changes with implementation of our Internet-based electronic commerce service, the importance of Internet access should become crystal clear.

On another subject, we're discussing the possibility of developing a purchasing users group for state agencies. The intent would be to provide a forum for state agencies to discuss purchasing issues over a broad range of topics - sort of a "share the knowledge and best practices group" that would meet periodically. We would not necessarily lead and definitely would not "control" this group. However, we would be pleased to act as a facilitator and even buy the doughnuts now and then. This would be analogous to the Procurement Advisory Group that consists of political subdivisions and provides input and guidance to Procurement on town- and school-related purchasing issues.

I would like to hear your thoughts and comments concerning the idea of a users group. Let me know what you think (email: jim.passier@po.state.ct.us). For that matter, feel free to contact me via email on *anything* or call at 860-713-5086. **S**

Jim Passier

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*A publication of
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When *Purchasing Power* was launched exactly one year ago next issue, it was done with a promise that the publication would be used solely as a means of disseminating and promoting hard news that its readers could put to use, along with information and success stories related to the state's Procurement activities.

Not wishing to stray too far from that intent, it seems appropriate to bring attention to some pretty neat things that have happened over the past month in DAS Procurement. One is that Procurement personnel

nearly swept



FROM THE NEWSDESK

the DAS' Employee Recognition Awards, with two teams (12 people in all) from Procurement winning the "Going the Extra Mile Award" and "Teamwork Award." Two people, Maureen Costigan and Lydia Rosario won in *both* categories. These people were nominated for a variety of reasons, but they won simply because they work well together, they work hard, and they're always looking for a way to work more effectively with their customers.

Perhaps an even better example of the teamwork and going-the-extra-mile spirit at DAS Procurement was displayed during a recent agency-wide toy drive. Procurement's Roger Mansfield, recalling that "getting a bike was always (his) most memorable present growing up," took a collection to see if he could get up enough money to buy a bicycle as a group gift for under the DAS tree. Response was so overwhelming, he was able to buy three. The local news came to cover the giveaway, which went to the Joy of Sharing campaign, and DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters donated three helmets to go with them. **S**

\$UCCESS \$TORY

Tropical Impression

Timing and a tasty product help land big contract for Scott's Jamaican Bakery

George Scott, of Scott's Jamaican Bakery in Hartford, recently paid a visit to Business CONNections Program Manager Meg Yetishefsky to be re-registered as a minority-owned business. Scott had apparently let the certification lapse, not having seen the value in it.

As it turned out, reapplying proved fruitful the minute he signed up. Literally.

When Yetishefsky was finished, she introduced Scott to Jay Churchill, a contract specialist in Procurement Services.

The state's current subcontractor for Jamaican patties - the popular curry vegetable, chicken, or beef confection - was getting out of the business.

"When I met Mr. Scott, he explained his past history with the state," remembered Churchill. Years ago, Scott supplied his products to the Department of Correction. "I remembered his company and working with them to approve his product. I asked Mr. Scott if we could tour his facility, and he agreed."

The vendor who had "lost faith in the program" has just nailed down a nearly quarter-million-dollar state contract, thanks to Business CONNections.

Churchill continued: "Jay Kelleher and Christine Harrison from US Foods (the state's prime food supplier), DAS Inspector Jim Gotta, Meg, and myself took the tour and sampled his product."

"We were very impressed with his establishment and his product," Churchill said. "Mr. Kelleher and I sat down to crunch the numbers and felt that Scott's would fit into our program."

Churchill asked Scott to the next Food Advisory Council meeting and arranged a product tasting and testing at the meeting. The council loved the products. As a result, Scott's became the new sub to US Foods on the state's contract, with an estimated annual value of \$225,000.

"This is a good example of a vendor who lost faith in the program and now, through the efforts of the Business CONNections and Procurement staff has been recertified and is connected with a state contract," said Yetishefsky. **S**

4 **New lunchtime PLC course to be Informally Informative**

PURCHASING POWER

The Procurement Learning Center is offering a free course called *Food for Thought*, Monday, February 1, and Wednesday, February 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the State Office Building on Capitol Avenue in Hartford. The

course is a continuation of the "Building Bridges to Our Customers" theme established at last month's *Introduction to Procurement Services for Vendors* course.



Registration is first-come-first-served at 860-713-5082, but this will be the first of several presentations given on this topic.

DAS Procurement Services has designed this course as an opportunity to address its customers, and informing them of where Procurement stands and where it is headed. Some of the topics to be

discussed include an overview of bid proposal and award processes, the Business CONNECTIONS Set-Aside Program, Internet opportunities, e-commerce, and Procurement Card opportunities.



Casual attire is encouraged. A complimentary lunch will be provided from noon to 1:00 p.m.

Those interested in attending are asked to please contact Laurie Melesko at 860-713-

5082 or Eva Merriman at 860-713-5083 by Monday, January 18. 



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