

New Bridge Will Allow Year-Round Trips in West Virginia on the Cass Scenic Railroad

Work on a new scenic train line connecting Durbin to Cass, West Virginia, is underway in Pocahontas County. The Trout Run Bridge crossing the Greenbrier River was damaged in the 1985 flood and never rebuilt until now.

The Purchasing Division assisted the State Rail Authority (SRA) with bids for a superstructure, which includes all the steel, bolts and fabricated parts that make up the bridge. This is the last piece of the railroad needing fixed to put this section of rail back into service.

The origin of this project dates back to 2015, when the SRA and Division of Natural Resources entered into an agreement that gave the SRA responsibility of the Cass Railroad. The SRA already had an agreement with the Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad (DGVR) company to operate the Durbin Line and the West Virginia Central Railroad. The operator agreed to take on the Cass Railroad, which connects to the West Virginia Central Railroad, and prior to the 1985 flood, connected



A project to put the Cass Scenic Railroad back in service from Durbin to Cass is now complete, thanks to the State Rail Authority and assistance from the West Virginia Purchasing Division. The updates to this section of railroad, which had been out of commission since 1985, will have a major economic impact on the region, allowing the train to run year round.

Please see **CASS RAILROAD**, page 4

INSIDE...

- **Director's Comments:** Purchasing Division Gives Many Thanks to Agency Procurement Officers, Staff
- Annual Surveys Provide Positive Feedback
- Purchasing Division Makes Changes to Contract Management for Contracts Exceeding \$1 Million
- Veteran-Owned Small Business Acquires Property through WVSASP

Purchasing Sees Increase in Processing at Federal Year End

While the state's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, the federal fiscal year extends from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, creating a busy end-of-year deadline for Purchasing Division staff.

David Pauline, senior buyer in the Acquisitions Unit of the Purchasing Division, processes requisitions on behalf of the West Virginia National Guard year round. This includes when they receive money from the National Guard Bureau. While the fiscal year spans a full 12 months, the National Guard often receives that funding a month or two before the federal year end, limiting the amount of time available to process these last-minute procurements and making this challenge even greater

"We have to show the money has been allocated by Sept. 30," Pauline said.

With assistance from the National Guard, Pauline processed more than \$10 million in requisitions on their behalf last fiscal year and more than \$8

Please see **FEDERAL YEAR END**, page 5

Purchasing Division Gives Many Thanks to Agency Procurement Officers, Staff

Grateful... Thankful... Blessed.

Three words often used to depict the fall season and the Thanksgiving holiday. Three words that grace the front of door wreaths, DIY signs, and t-shirts. They are everywhere you turn. Simple, yet impactful. In this season of giving “thanks,” I want to take a minute to say “thank you” to our agency procurement officers and my staff.

In October, we sent out our annual Agency Satisfaction Survey. We know the survey is long, and we know it can be rigorous to complete, but we also know your feedback has led to significant changes, changes we believe have improved the process for everyone. In the last year, we set forth to implement changes advocated by you. Those included making certain cooperative contracts optional for use, permitting agencies to competitively bid for those goods or services instead in accordance with purchasing guidelines for the various spending thresholds; posting all new contract awards, change orders, and delivery orders on our website within one business day of encumbering those documents; and introducing legislation that would effectively shorten the purchasing process. As we wade through the results of this year’s survey, we will take all feedback into consideration. To learn more about the responses to the survey, see the article on page 3. Although the deadline for this survey has passed, we will keep the survey open and welcome you to complete it through the month of November, if you have not already done so.

I would also like to thank my staff members, who assist agencies with pre-solicitation tasks and who work tirelessly day in and day out, all year long, to process purchases in an expeditious manner at a quality level that can be upheld and admired. Of note, one of our buying teams helped push

through more than \$8 million in contracts for the Adjutant General’s Office in the month before the federal fiscal year ended. As an agency that often receives federal funding and/or grants with little notice, the Purchasing Division is prepared at this time each year to work aggressively with them to help push through the solicitations. That task can be strenuous, but successfully publishing those solicitations and awarding the subsequent contracts quickly and efficiently is something we strive for each year, and we also recognize we that we couldn’t do it without help from our agency partners, so thank you. For more on this year’s accomplishment, see the article on page 1.



Finally, I want to say a huge “thank you” to an employee who has devoted the last 11 years of her career to the Purchasing Division. Last month, we said goodbye to Lu Anne Cottrill, our quality control and transparency specialist, as she exited the workforce to focus on retirement, her family, and her farm. Lu Anne was integral in the posting of bids to our website daily, as well as posting contract awards, and she will be missed by all of us here.

I am truly grateful to be in the presence of so many individuals who choose to serve our state. I believe in the work that we do, the integrity that we do it with, and the positive impact it has on our state both financially and on our state taxpayers.

Longtime Purchasing Division Employee Retires

Following many years of service to the state, Lu Anne Cottrill retired last month from the Purchasing Division. Cottrill served as the Quality Control and Transparency Specialist within the Business and Technical Services section.

Cottrill began working at the Purchasing Division in 2010 as an office assistant before transferring to her final position. Prior to joining the Purchasing Division, Cottrill worked for West Virginia University and Berkeley County Schools.

“I have enjoyed my time at the Purchasing Division and feel lucky to have had such good co-workers,” said

Cottrill.

While she is retiring, Cottrill will be moonlighting a few days a week at the Purchasing Division until her position is filled. With her newly acquired free time, Cottrill looks forward to spending more time with family—especially her granddaughter.

“I am moving back to my hometown now that I am retiring,” said Cottrill. “My husband and I look forward to reconnecting with old friends and the new house we are building.”

Thank you, Lu Anne, for your hard work over the years, and we wish you the best of luck in your retirement.



Lu Anne Cottrill, former Quality Control and Transparency Specialist

Annual Surveys Show Strong Agency/Gov. Connection

Each year the Purchasing Division conducts a large survey of both agencies and local government entities to gain feedback and learn what areas need improvement. As the Purchasing Division plans for 2022, these responses will be reviewed and used to improve its programs and services.

Agency Satisfaction Survey

On a scale of "Very Poor" to "Excellent," respondents were asked to rate the following objectives regarding the Purchasing Division's programs, services and other offerings.

- **97%** rated the professionalism of Purchasing Division staff as "Excellent" or "Good"
- **94%** rated the accuracy of information provided by the Purchasing Division as "Excellent" or "Good"
- **86%** rated the responsiveness of their agency's designated Purchasing Division buyer as "Excellent" or "Good"
- **85%** said the Purchasing Division does an "Excellent" or "Good" job in providing agencies with effective solutions to meet their needs
- **82%** rated the Purchasing Division's understanding of customer needs as "Excellent" or "Good"
- **81%** rated the accessibility to their agency's designated Purchasing Division buyer as "Excellent" or "Good"

Additionally, respondents said training is the most beneficial service provided by the Purchasing Division, followed by statewide contracts. Respondents also said the Division excels at statewide contracts and training and education.



Local Governments Satisfaction Survey

The Purchasing Division also sent a survey to local government entities that included municipalities and schools. **Forty-seven percent** of the respondents were from education, **24%** from municipalities, **4%** of the respondents were county representatives, and **2%** from fire departments.

Seventy-three percent of respondents said they would be interested in participating in outreach events hosted by the Purchasing Division. If the Division were to conduct an online webinar for government entities, the number one topic chosen to cover was a Beginner's Guide to Purchasing, followed by Available Contracts and Best Items for your Money.

Respondents also expressed interest in the following commodities for future statewide contracts: playground equipment (**53%**), fire service equipment (**45%**), lawn maintenance equipment (**42%**), uniforms (**42%**), school furniture (**37%**), generators (**37%**), and elevator maintenance (**32%**).

Forty-seven percent of respondents said training from the Purchasing Division would be beneficial and would like to see training on the purchasing process from beginning to end, HVAC controls, and backhoe certification.

Thank you to everyone who took these surveys. While these surveys are conducted only once per year, your comments, concerns, and suggestions are always welcome. To provide your feedback throughout the year, please contact us at **Purchasing.Division@wv.gov**.

Purchasing Division Makes Changes to Contract Management for Contracts Exceeding \$1 Million

The management of contracts exceeding \$1 million has recently undergone a few changes as part of an initiative to standardize the post award process. Of the changes implemented, required contract management forms were reduced from three to two. Following these large awards, the Purchasing Division will now send a letter to the agency outlining the contract management steps that need to be taken once an award is processed.

The three forms previously required included the *Post Award Conference* (WV-90), *Monitoring* (WV-91), and *Status and Activity* (WV-92) reports. Now only the *Post Award Conference* and *Status and Activity* reports are required.

According to Greg Clay, the state contracts manager of the Purchasing Division, the number of forms were reduced due to replication among them. The *Status and*

Activity report encompasses a monitoring policy, and therefore, eliminated the need for the additional monitoring form.

The WV-90 must be completed by the agency administrator, who is responsible for holding a post award conference with the contractor to ensure a clear and mutual understanding of all contract terms and conditions and responsibilities of all parties. This conference should be conducted as soon as possible following the award.

"Naturally, once you award a contract, even if it is less than \$1 million, you want to do a post award conference with that vendor to go over terms and conditions, review the specifications, and to give them an opportunity to ask questions," Clay said.

The WV-92 consists of progress of work, deliverables and products, unresolved issues, and the number of complet-

ed transactions. This *Status and Activity* report must be submitted to the Purchasing Division no less than twice a year and within two weeks of contract closeout and final acceptance.

Once an award exceeding \$1 million has been processed, Clay then mails the agency a letter explaining the contract management procedures, along with the new forms (WV-90 and WV-92) to complete. These forms can also be obtained on the Purchasing Division's website at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/forms.html.

"I always stress that it is most important to document your file. It can mitigate disputes, offer resources when needed, and answer important questions," Clay continued.

Completed forms can be submitted to Clay at Gregory.C.Clay@wv.gov.

U.S. General Services Administration Reviews WVSASP Procedures and Progress of Program

The General Services Administration (GSA) Personal Property Management team recently completed its review of the West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP) and highlighted the progress of the agency's Federal Surplus Property Program.

The review considers several aspects, including operational capabilities, fiscal management, program compliance and records management. Following each review, formal follow-up reviews are scheduled two or four years out based on the results of the current review. The GSA team announced it wouldn't need to formally review WVSASP operations again until 2025 due to the significant progress made in the state's Federal Surplus Property Program.

According to the review, "The agency [WVSASP] has addressed several issues relevant to its operations that have stabilized its status and reinvigorated its efforts to obtain more property and attract more customers moving forward. It appears to be on the right track."

"I am very pleased with the results of the review," said Elizabeth Cooper, WVSASP manager. "I give credit to our federal surplus property manager Doug Elkins, and to Matt Harper who willingly stepped in as acting federal surplus property manager when Doug was unexpectedly out of the office for a few months. Doug and Matt believe in the mission of the program and under-

stand how to achieve it."

The GSA review cited the recent donation of two planes as a big plus, and that the obtaining of property from overseas shows progress. Information on the plane donation can be seen in the September issue of *The Buyers Network* or in the WVSASP's 2021 third quarter newsletter *The Property Connection* at WVSurplus.gov.

"These, together with the development of warehousing facilities and new transport capabilities, along with webinars for entities like nonprofits, should have a positive impact on expanding business and meeting customer needs," the review said.

State agencies are eligible to receive donations of federal property. Federal property available for donation includes construction equipment, fire trucks, industrial machinery, medical equipment, tools, and much more. For more information on the Federal Surplus Property Program, visit www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/surplus/federal.html or call 304.766.2626.



**West Virginia State Agency
for Surplus Property**

WVSurplus.gov

CASS RAILROAD

Continued from Page 1

to Durbin.

After starting operations, the DGVR crews started working on the track between Cass and Durbin. They pulled the track out of the river in some places, began adding ballast to the railbed and put the track back piece by piece. Four other bridges on the railbed were in good shape but the Trout Run Bridge was completely washed out. Crews couldn't get in the water due to the existence of the endangered candy darter fish, so a plan had to be designed that would span Trout Run. The SRA hired an engineer and plans were completed. The first attempt at a bid for a contractor to complete the work came in at more than three times the estimate. It was back to the drawing board, and the SRA asked the Division of Highways (DOH) if they could try to accomplish this project in-house.

The DOH, DGVR, and SRA worked together as a team and completed the required environmental work as well as

pouring the footers. Pouring the footers was no easy task as the location of this bridge is remote, with the only access by rail. Once that work was complete, the SRA put out another solicitation seeking a contractor to provide the steel and labor to erect the bridge. Once again, all bids came in over the estimate. DOH engineers then came up with a plan to have DOH, SRA, and DGVR crews erect the bridge themselves and complete this as a team. That is what led to the current bid for a superstructure unit. When the steel, bolts, and beams are delivered to Cass in May 2022, the DOT and DGVR will erect the bridge and complete the final phase of this project, which should take eight to 12 weeks.

New options for travel packages will be available once the bridge is complete.

"An additional 9.5 miles will be added to our system," said Cindy Butler, director of the SRA. "This section of rail will allow our operator to offer winter trips. It

is currently not possible to run any trains at Cass in the winter because of the steep grades. With this section of track open, trains will have the ability to run year-round. Not only will it add to the operator's ridership numbers, but it will also boost the Cass Scenic Railroad State Park with added tourists to their Company Store and overnight stays in the refurbished Company houses."

"Sometimes in doing procurement we run across some very important purchases that enhance the lives of the citizens, but we don't always know why," said Purchasing Division Buyer Toby Welch, who assisted the State Rail Authority with this procurement. "This is an example of a purchase that will provide a very tangible benefit to the state."

The Purchasing Division is pleased to showcase this as one of the many unique projects processed through its central office.

Veteran-Owned Small Business Acquires Property through WVSASP

With the implementation of the Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act of 2018, veteran-owned small businesses now have access to retired federal property through the West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP). Rockwood Properties LLC in Princeton is the first veteran-owned small business to acquire property through this program.

“The program has saved me thousands of dollars,” said Leland Price, owner of Rockwood Properties. “I am excited about how this will impact my business.”

Rockwood Properties acquired a forklift through WVSASP which has already been put to use. The forklift is being used in the business’ construction operations by moving heavy pallets and lifting shingles and other roofing materials.

“The forklift has already paid for itself,” said Price.

Veterans interested in participating in this program must first register and be verified with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Upon receiving verification, veterans may complete WVSASP’s *Application for Eligibility for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses*. Once this form is approved, veterans will be issued a unique user ID and



password to screen for federal property.

“It took some time to get verified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs,” said Price. “But it was absolutely worth the wait to have access to federal property.”

WVSASP will present a webinar on Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021, at 2 p.m. on how veteran-owned small businesses can acquire federal property. To register for this free webinar, please *visit <https://bit.ly/3jgIkj5>*.

FEDERAL YEAR END

Continued from Page 1

million during the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2021.

Processing the requisition requires more than recording amounts or filing paperwork. Each requisition is reviewed for proper procedures and documentation. If something is missing, it goes back to the agency, and that takes time.

The biggest causes of a slowdown in the process include vendors not being registered or not having the proper documentation with their bids.

“When agencies have their pre-bid meetings, they’ll tell the vendors this involves federal year end funds and will have to be processed by the end of September and the successful vendor will have to be prepared to move quickly,” Pauline said.

The last couple months of the federal fiscal year require teamwork and cooperation to get through longer days, but it always gets done.

Purchasing Recognizes Latest Basic Certification Recipient

The Purchasing Division is pleased to recognize Jason Thompson as the latest recipient in its West Virginia Procurement: Basic Certification program.

Thompson, an inspector in the Contract Management Unit of the Purchasing Division, has worked for the state since August 2020.

“When I first came to Purchasing, I dedicated time to reading and getting familiar with the Purchasing Handbook,” Thompson said. “I work with a small group of inspectors, five of us altogether, along with State Contracts Manager Greg Clay, and they have really helped me understand purchasing procedures in order to have the ability to perform the duties of my job. I have worked with each of them individually and as part of a group. We work closely together, and I really enjoy being a part of this team. Passing this exam was definitely a goal I set for myself from day one.”

State agency procurement officers interested in participating in the basic and/or advanced certification programs may review the requirements at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/Certification. Any questions regarding the certification program may be directed to Courtney Johnson at Courtney.S.Johnson@wv.gov or 304.558.4213.

The Purchasing Division would like to congratulate Thompson on this noteworthy accomplishment.

Buyers Network

THE BUYERS NETWORK

Purchasing Division
State Capitol Complex
2019 Washington St., East
Charleston, WV 25305-0130

Telephone: 304.558.2306
8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (M-F)

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Current Statewide Contract Update

(As of Oct. 14, 2021)

This page includes a listing of current changes made to statewide contracts issued by the Purchasing Division. Information and dates listed in this **Current Statewide Contract Update** are subject to change. All statewide contracts are available online at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/swc. For more information, please contact the buyer assigned to statewide contracts.

Contract Renewals

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Effective Date
AIRFARE21	Delta	Chartered Airplane Travel	10/01/21 -09/30/22

WVARF19 WV Assoc. of Janitorial services To provide updated Fair Market Pricing (FMP) sheets
Rehab Facilities

Miscellaneous Actions

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Description of Change
CRENTAL20A	Enterprise	Vehicle Leasing	To incorporate NASPO amendments

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Below is a list of Purchasing Division buyers assigned to specific state agencies.

Training Dates to Remember

For more information, visit WVPurchasing.gov or contact Purchasing.Training@wv.gov.

To register, visit onlinelearning.wv.gov.

Vendor Registration (PUR111W)

November 3, 2021 | 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Mandatory Training for High-Level Officials (PUR400W)

November 4, 2021 | 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Agency Delegated Purchasing (PUR218W)

November 17, 2021 | 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Forms and Documents / Inspection Services (PUR309W)

December 1, 2021 | 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Managing Your Vendor (PUR214W)

December 15, 2021 | 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

BUYER	E-MAIL	PHONE
<u>Supervisors</u>		
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Linda Harper	Linda.B.Harper@wv.gov	558-0468
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