

THE BUYERS NETWORK

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THE BUYERS NETWORK is Published Monthly by the Purchasing Division of the West Virginia Department of Administration to Promote Better Value in Public Purchasing.

Planned Capitol Project Proceeds After Years of Waiting

As part of its original design, the West Virginia Capitol was meant to have decorative murals placed on the interior of the dome. However, before this could be completed, the Great Depression hit and put the project on hold. After an attempt to revisit the project in the 2000s fell through, the Department of Arts, Culture and History is actively working to complete it.

The completion of this project involves the Department acquiring the artwork itself and the installation of that artwork. Due to the historic nature, both aspects required meticulous planning. Using the guidelines under Section 9 of the *Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook*, the Department was able to retain the services of the artist through the Impossible to Bid List, and then secure the installation through the direct award process.

"The recent Section 9 exemption purchase



The Department of Arts, Culture and History is working on the installation of a mural inside the Capitol dome. Originally planned during the 1930s construction, the project has had many delays. The original design, seen above, is being referenced for the project.

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Purchasing Division Returns to In-Person Conference; Prepares for 2023 with Participant Input

After pausing since 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, an in-person Agency Purchasing Conference was held in August at The Resort at Glade Springs in Daniels, W. Va. The conference was canceled in 2020 and held virtually in 2021.

This three-day training opportunity provided attendees with a closer look at the state purchasing process as well as offered ample time for peer networking. The conference agenda included a total of 55 sessions, with topics ranging from statewide contracts and inspection services to West Virginia Office of Technology requirements and vendor registration. The conference also featured a virtual option that offered 11 webinars for participants who were unable to travel to the conference.

Following the conclusion of each Purchasing Division conference, attendees are invited to provide valuable feedback through an online

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Successful Conference Completed, Your Ideas Accepted and Addressed in Special Issue

As F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall." Now that the Agency Purchasing Conference at Glade Springs is behind us, we turn the page and start planning for next year's conference. Part of the planning process involves incorporating your valuable feedback. Nearly 75% of attendees took the time to complete the online survey we sent following the conference, and we are thrilled that so many of you felt the conference was worthwhile and the information you learned will help you in your day-to-day jobs. Ninety-five percent of you rated your overall opinion of the conference as "excellent" or "good."

In addition to hosting nearly 200 procurement officers in person, we also offered a virtual option this year. Those who attended virtually told us they appreciated being able to stay in their offices while still engaging with presenters and gaining knowledge. There were several comments on the surveys we will take into consideration, including suggestions for new topics. Please send us those at any time and we will consider them for both the annual conference and our regular training sessions throughout the year.

We also asked for your suggestions during the Conference for both procedural and legislative changes that would make the procurement process more efficient and effective. The "Idea Board" was set up near the registration desk and was covered in post-it notes by the end of the week. Some of the ideas included streamlining vendor registration and allowing agencies to bid on a contract together or utilize existing contracts. We wanted the opportunity to address each one, so we developed a special issue of *The Buyers Network* that can be accessed online at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/BN/si-22sept.pdf.

www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/BN/si-22sept.pdf.

As part of its ongoing effort to improve its services and based on feedback from conference attendees, the Purchasing Division has launched a newly designed Agency Resource Center on its website. This simplified version still contains much of the same information but in a way that is easier to navigate. We hope you will find it useful and more efficient than it was previously. You can see the updated version at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/arc.

While many of you recently attended our conference, please note that our regular training sessions are back in full swing with both webinars and in-person sessions. In addition, our biannual mandatory training for high-level officials, co-presented with the State Auditor's Office, is scheduled for Nov. 3, 2022, via webinar. This presentation will cover both purchasing procedures and rules surrounding the use of the state's Purchasing Card. This training is not for agency procurement officers, but please encourage the upper-level staff within your agencies to attend to ensure they are in compliance with W. Va. Code § 5A-3-60.

As always, we are here to help make your jobs easier. Don't forget our new helpline, Purchasing.Help@wv.gov, and please be sure to share it with all of your procurement staff.



Build List or Bill of Materials: Code Still Requires 'Or Equal' Phrasing if Using Brand Name in Requisition

The Purchasing Division was recently asked how to handle build lists or a bill of materials provided by another state agency when that build list references brand/vendor specific products. In all cases, except where a standard has been established, prohibitions on limiting competition to a single brand or vendor continue to apply. Section 3.2.2.1 of the *Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook* includes the requirement that specifications are to include the phrase "or equal" if giving the brand name of a product for which the agency is seeking

bids.

Agency procurement officers need to spell out what is compatible. The specifications should be complete and written in a way that allows for competitive bidding. The Division provides a *Specification Drafting Tips* reference sheet at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/Documents/SpecificationDraftingTips.pdf.

According to the Purchasing Division Handbook:

"Spending units may not use brand or vendor names to restrict competition, and any use of a brand name (other than

brand names used to describe what the State already has) must be followed by the phrase 'or equal' to inform vendors that alternate bids will be considered. The specifications must also list the mandatory components of the commodity or service that the reference to the brand or vendor name is intended to capture. A vendor's equality with the brand or vendor name will be evaluated based on the mandatory components only."

The handbook can be found at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/Handbook.

Procurement Officers Can Check for Vendor Compliance

Before a vendor can be awarded a contract, they must be in compliance with several state agencies outside of the Purchasing Division. The wvOASIS system completes several of these compliance checks automatically, but there are ways the agency procurement officer can make sure a vendor is in compliance themselves.

Below is a list of the types of checks necessary and the sites used in manual searches:

- Secretary of State (manual search needed):
<https://apps.sos.wv.gov/business/corporations>
 - End-user types in vendor name (can use the % for a wild card search)
- Businesses on the federal debarment list (manual search needed):
<https://sam.gov/content>
- Businesses on the state debarment list (manual search needed):
www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/debar.html
- Worker's Compensation:
<http://ucemployers.workforcewv.org/bep/ucwcdef/psig/login.htm> (username and password is admin; end-user can enter vendor's FEIN, business name or DBA)

- Office of the Insurance Commissioner Employer Violator System:
<https://icomp.wvinsurance.gov/Login/EmpViolator.asp> (end user clicks on alphabet letter of vendor's name)
- Office of the Insurance Commissioner Defaulted Account
<http://apps.wvinsurance.gov/defaulted> (end user enters FEIN or business name or DBA)

The Purchasing Division has created a compliance checklist to make it easier for procurement officers to complete this task. To view this checklist, visit www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/arc/ComplianceChecks_ReferenceGuide.pdf.



CONFERENCE RECAP

Continued from Page 1

evaluation. Approximately 72% percent, or 128 of this year's 178 agency attendees, took time to evaluate the 2022 conference, providing constructive feedback regarding this year's conference along with suggestions for next year. The Purchasing Division is pleased to share some of the results.

Conference participants rated various categories in a four-scale survey, ranging from "Excellent" to "Poor".

- 99% said conference registration was "Excellent" or "Good"
- 97% said conference organization was "Excellent" or "Good"
- 91% said the variety of classes was "Excellent" or "Good"
- 95% said their overall opinion of the conference was "Excellent" or "Good"

Additionally, 100% of survey respondents found the overall quality of the conference sessions to be professional and effective; 100% found the conference atmosphere to be conducive for learning, and 98% found the learning environment engaging.

Meanwhile, 71% downloaded and utilized the Grupio conference app, with 97% rating its ease of accessibility as "Excellent" or "Good", 96% rating the variety of information contained within the app as "Excellent" or "Good", and 81% support the use of an app in the future.

The Purchasing Division received many positive comments on the survey. They include the following:

- "The sessions were informative, and I enjoyed meeting the Purchasing staff."
- "Purchasing staff members were always helpful, friendly, and were very knowledgeable."
- "I loved how the presenters were open for questions and had a great attitude."
- "I liked the social aspect of the conference. I got to talk to other people who are performing the same tasks as myself and get their opinions on subjects."

Virtual attendees were also surveyed. Fifty-seven, or 56% of the 102 virtual participants, rated it as "Excellent" or

"Good". Also:

- 98% said the overall quality of the webinars presented was professional and effective
- 93% said the webinar content was appropriate for their level of knowledge
- 95% said they will be able to use the information learned in the webinars in their daily tasks

Several virtual attendees reported they liked being able to participate without having to travel. One virtual attendee liked "the flexibility of being in the office" to stay up to date on regular work while still completing 11 classes in three days.

"All the presenters were very personable and knowledgeable. I didn't feel lost or bored," said another virtual participant. "The hour-long sessions were just the right amount of time."

The Purchasing Division would like to thank all respondents of this survey and will take into consideration all feedback as it begins to plan the 2023 Agency Purchasing Conference.

Procurement Officers Reminded to Follow Official Policy When Purchasing from Amazon

The Purchasing Division reminds agency procurement officers that the use of Amazon Business Prime requires following bidding procedures and policies that are in place for all purchases.

In 2019, the state entered into a terms agreement with Amazon Business Prime on behalf of all state agencies. The agreement allows agencies to make purchases more quickly when appropriate with Amazon because the terms and conditions have already been negotiated. In most cases, the state's account is strictly used for small dollar purchases that never exceed \$5,000 in a 12-month period. However, agencies are reminded that aggregate spend applies across the spending unit, and agencies should

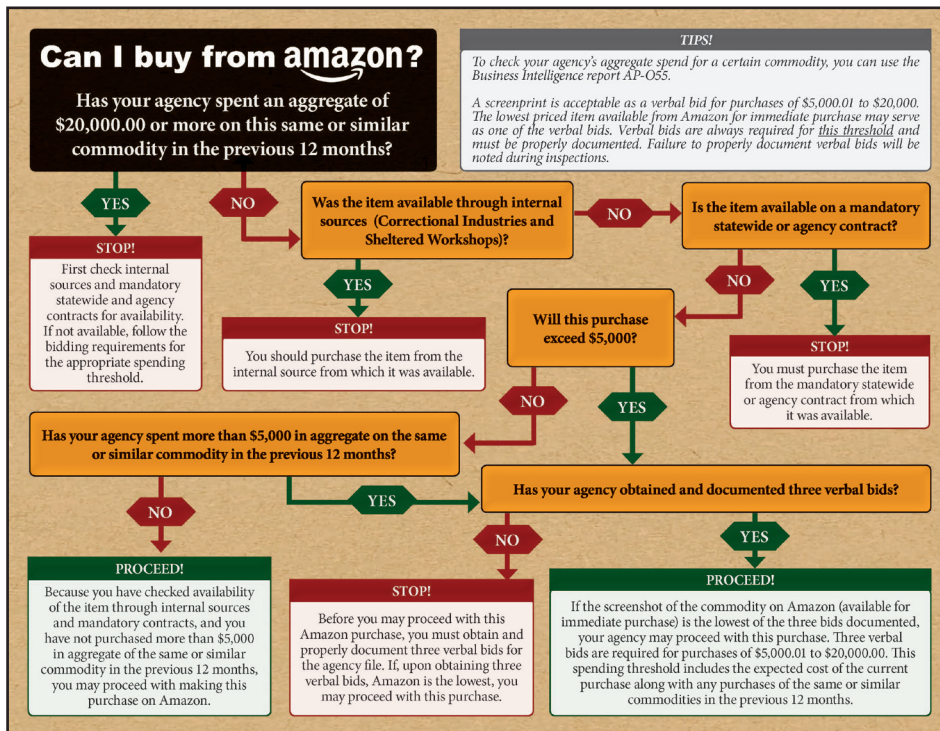
track that spend to ensure they are following the correct bidding requirements for the spending threshold and seeking verbal or written bids when required.

The designated administrator for each group within the state of West Virginia's account has access to pull spend reports for his or her specific agency. To do this, the administrator should hover over his or her name in the upper right-hand corner of the screen once logged in and then select "Business Analytics". From there, the administrator can scroll to the "Reports" section. Report types include reconciliation, orders, refunds, and more.

Purchases under the \$5,000 threshold may be procured through the state's Amazon Business Prime account, while a screenshot of the Amazon item and its price may serve as one of the verbal bids for purchases between \$5,000 and \$20,000 in aggregate.

By purchasing through the state's Amazon Business Prime account, state agencies will receive automatic tax-exempt purchasing, free two-day shipping on eligible items, business-specific pricing, access to a specialized Amazon Business Customer Service team, and more.

During the implementation phase of Amazon Business Prime, the Purchasing Division hosted two webinars for administrators and requisitioners. Both trainings are available on the Purchasing Division's webpage at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/SWC/AMAZON.htm.



The Purchasing Division created a flow chart to assist procurement officers in knowing when to purchase from Amazon. For a copy of this chart, please email Purchasing.Training@wv.gov.

Registration Now Open for November Mandatory Purchasing Webinar for High-Level Officials

The Purchasing Division and State Auditor's Office are pleased to invite the state's high-level officials to register for its first State Officials' Purchasing Procedures and Purchasing Card Training for Fiscal Year 2023. This two-hour webinar, scheduled for Nov. 3, 2022, is offered twice per year for high-level state officials as required by W. Va. Code § 5A-3-60.

According to the law, high-level officials include "executive department secretaries (i.e. Cabinet Secretaries), commissioners, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, directors, deputy directors, assistant directors, department

heads, deputy department heads, and assistant department heads."

Space is limited to the first 100 people to register. Interested individuals may register by completing the online form posted at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/mandatory.html. To remain in compliance, high-level officials must complete this training by June 30, 2023.

The webinar will be recorded and posted in CourseMill for later viewing.

CAPITOL ARTWORK

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for the commodity of historical artwork to be recreated and transposed onto marouflage canvas murals will be completed by the company in possession of the original artwork,” said Cara Suppa, procurement officer for the Department of Arts, Culture and History.

The artwork to be placed is an original design by architect Cass Gilbert and uses the marouflage technique. Marouflage is a 3,000-year-old method that will allow for a canvas mural to be directly applied to the interior of the Capitol dome. By using this technique, the artwork can be easily repaired or replaced as needed. It also offers a more natural and realistic decoration. Guided by Cass Gilbert’s original notes, installation company John Canning & Company is developing a color palette that will enhance the marble and architectural style of the Capitol.

“John Canning & Company is an architectural arts restoration contractor with specialized experts in art conservation and historical decoration,” explained Suppa. “This company was also a subcontractor for the gilding of the Capitol dome in 2004, completed all the artwork and period paintings for the remodeling of the Governor’s Mansion, and worked on the mural artwork at Independence Hall in Wheeling.”

Additionally, John Canning & Company is a member of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC). This association is one of two conservation organizations in the U.S., the other being the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA) that provides rigorous, peer reviewed, professional membership in their respective organizations. Any AIC or ICA member must adhere to a code of ethics that requires fully reversible conservation treatments. In this instance, John Canning & Company is acting in its professional role as an Art & Historic Preservation Conservator.

The Department is currently working with John Canning & Company in the design phase, which involves developing and finalizing mock-up compositions from the original, historical artwork. Once the art has been approved, the compositions will be transferred to canvas using artists’ oil paints and glazes. The last phase of this project will be the installation itself.

The Purchasing Division is pleased to recognize this long-awaited project by the Department of Arts, Culture, and History for its responsible procurement involving a highly technical and unique situation.

Purchasing Division Recognizes Latest Certification Recipient

The Purchasing Division is pleased to announce Melissa Spitzer as the latest recipient in its West Virginia Procurement: Basic Certification program.

Spitzer, a procurement associate for the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), has worked for the state for 12 years, first on a temporary basis with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife section. In 2014 she became a permanent employee, processing background checks for the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families as an Office Assistant II. She then worked as an Office Assistant III for the Bureau for Child Support Enforcement before becoming a Secretary I then Procurement Associate for DHHR. She has been a procurement associate for the past year.

“Passing the Basic Certification test was an accomplishment for me, and I must say it was challenging,” Spitzer said. “Having this certification shows that I am a professional in procurement and have an overall understanding of the state Purchasing Handbook and laws. This will also open career advancement opportunities for me. I really appreciate our supervisory staff allowing me this opportunity and the team support that was required to help get me to this point.”

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.S.Johnson@wv.gov.



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Current Statewide Contract Update

(As of Sept. 15, 2022)

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.

New Contracts

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Effective Date
DATATRNSE	Verizon Business	Telecom Services	07/01/22 -06/30/23
EMGLIGHT-22C	Whelen Engineering	Vehicle Safety	08/15/22 -08/31/23

Agency Resource Center Webpage Receives New Design

As part of its ongoing effort to improve its services, the Purchasing Division has launched a newly designed Agency Resource Center on its website. This simplified version still contains much of the same information but in a way that is easier to access.

"The Agency Resource Center is an important asset on our website for procurement officers," said Purchasing Director Mike Sheets. "Our goal was always to take this tool and increase its usefulness by removing information not used in procurement officers' day-to-day operations."

To ensure the new Agency Resource Center would be useful to procurement officers, attendees at last month's Purchasing Division conference were invited to give feedback on the new design.

"I like how everything is grouped as opposed to one long list," said one surveyed procurement officer. "The new design looks much easier to use."

The new Agency Resource Center can be viewed at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/arc. Have an idea for another Purchasing Division webpage that could use a redesign or information that needs to be listed online? Suggestions can be sent to Purchasing.Division@wv.gov.

EQRENT22A	United Rentals	Construction Equipment	11/15/21 -02/21/23
SBUSTIRE22A	S & S Firestone	School Bus Tires	09/01/22 -08/31/23
SBUSTIRE22B	Appalachian Tire Products	School Bus Tires	09/01/22 -08/31/23
WVARF23	WV Assoc. of Rehab Facilities	Janitorial Svcs	09/01/22 -08/31/23

Contracts Renewals

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Effective Date
ESRI21	Environmental Systems Research Institute	Geographic Info. Systems	08/20/22 -08/19/23

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

BUYER	E-MAIL	PHONE
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