

THE BUYERS NETWORK

MARCH 2013 - VOL. 23, ISSUE 3

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

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin Proclaims March 2013 as Purchasing Month in West Virginia

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has proclaimed that March 2013 be recognized as **Purchasing Month** throughout the state of West Virginia. Gov. Tomblin made the proclamation in February.

The West Virginia Purchasing Division led the initiative for the proclamation, in cooperation with the state chapter of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP). NIGP engages in special efforts every March to promote its mission to develop, support and promote public procurement practitioners through educational and research programs.

“Our state procurement officers are the stewards of the budgeted dollars, ensuring that the proper procedures and laws are followed to gain the biggest return to the state’s dollars in an

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Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin (center) proclaimed March 2013 as Purchasing Month in the state of West Virginia. This month recognizes the work of our public procurement professionals throughout the state. Pictured with Governor Tomblin are Department of Administration Cabinet Secretary Ross Taylor (l) and Purchasing Director Dave Tincher (r).

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Purchasing Division Open House Set for May 14

It is time to mark Tuesday, May 14, on your calendar. This is the date for this year’s annual Purchasing Division **Open House**. The event will take place from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the agency’s office at 2019 Washington Street, East.

This is the sixth consecutive year the Purchasing Division has hosted to this event. The **Open House** will have many features to offer.

For the past two years, informational sessions have been offered but unlike the past, this year there will be three 40-minute sessions instead of four 30-minute sessions to provide

more time for discussion.

“We have extended the information sessions this year because our 30-minute sessions were running beyond the allotted time. This is an excellent indicator that the presenters and participants were engaged in the subject matter, which is what we wish to see at our Open House events,” said Purchasing Director Dave Tincher. “By extending the informational sessions, we can continue to have productive dialogue between our staff

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Purchasing Month Brings Recognition to Public Purchasers Throughout State Government

By Purchasing Director Dave Tincer

The month of March has been proclaimed as **Purchasing Month** in West Virginia by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. This recognition serves as a symbol of the importance placed on procurement professionals in the public sector throughout our state.

The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, an international procurement organization, created the concept of designating this one month of each year when all public purchasing professionals are recognized throughout the world for the contributions that they provide to

their respective organizations.

There are many responsibilities that public procurement officers have in our state government.

First and foremost is having an understanding of the statutory and regulatory requirements for state purchasing. Our jobs as purchasing professionals require a constant review of the laws, rules and procedures that direct our actions in public procurement.

Similar to other professionals, the role that we play in state government is not constant; therefore, it is a good practice to frequently review the requirements and processes that we must follow. Every decision we make, as purchasing professionals, is based on these resources. We must do our due diligence and be knowledgeable



able of all aspects of public procurement in state government.

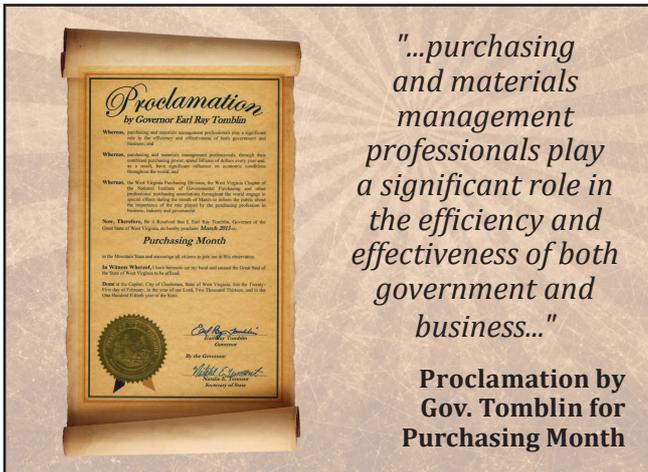
The West Virginia Purchasing Certification Program, administered by the Purchasing Division, showcases the attributes of a professional public purchaser.

Equally important is maintaining successful communication among peers, superiors, and the

Purchasing Division. Procurement officers must have an understanding the responsibilities of educating and informing others in your organization of procurement practices and procedures.

Another component of public procurement is continuing to enhance vendor relations. We must always look at the vendor community as potential suppliers to state government and by enhancing our relationships with vendors will result in participation in the competitive bid process. And, as we are all fully aware, competition among the vendor community ultimately results in savings to the state.

Join me and my staff in celebrating the month of March as **Purchasing Month** in West Virginia!



New Conference Format Offers More Flexibility to Participants

For the last several years, the Beginner's and Advanced Tracks have become a staple of the Agency Purchasing Conference. State agency purchasers with two years or less experience in public purchasing were encouraged to attend a six-class series providing introductory courses related to the state purchasing process. Conversely, those state employees designated as primary and backup procurement officers have benefited by attending the Advanced Track. With changes to the format of the 2013 Agency Purchasing Conference, these specific tracks based on experience and knowledge will temporarily be suspended, but the classes themselves will remain.

Changes to this year's agenda and length of the conference resulted in fewer workshops with less offered concurrently.



Rather than locking individuals into attending an entire track with specific classes at specific times, the classes which previously composed these tracks are still being offered but with more flexibility for participants.

State employees new to state procurement are still encouraged to take

the classes which made up the Beginner's Track, including Basic Purchasing, Vendor Registration, Statewide Contracts, Requests for Quotation, and Evaluation and Award. These sessions are all offered at separate times so that individuals may still reap the benefits of the Beginner's Track, or may choose only those sessions as needed.

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Production of the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin Part of Vital Process for Division

This is part of an on-going series of articles which takes a closer look at the inner workings of the Purchasing Division. This article looks at the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin.

The weekly publication of the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin represents more than a listing of bid opportunities, said Purchasing Applications Specialist Mark Totten. "Next to the receipt of bids from the vendor community, the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin represents our most vital process in the Purchasing Division," Totten said.

The West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin is the method used to advertise competitive bid opportunities expected to exceed \$25,000. Required by *West Virginia Code of State Rules* §148-1-7, the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin offers a current list of opportunities for vendors interested in doing business with the state of West Virginia.

"The Purchasing Bulletin creates a competitive atmosphere by advertising any needs the state has for procured commodities and services," Totten said. The weekly process to create the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin begins with the input of information from Purchasing Buyers in the Acquisition and Contract Administration (ACA) Section of the Purchasing Division into TEAM, the state's automated purchasing system.

"The information on planned solicitations is compiled on the mainframe and processed by our Technical Services employees," Totten said. "The Communication and Technical Services section works with ACA to verify and polish the information to be included in the



Purchasing Applications Specialist Mark Totten, right, and Programmer Analyst Casey Hill work to produce the weekly West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin, which advertises bid opportunities expected to exceed \$25,000.

current week's solicitations. The Purchasing Bulletin is rigorously edited before it is published for the public, state agencies, and vendor community."

Totten said the Purchasing Bulletin was once printed in hard copy form and mailed to registered vendors, but since 2005 its complete form has existed in a website-only format, though printed copies of the advertisements are available to anyone who visits the Purchasing Division office. Totten said the online version provides more complete

information than the printed version.

"With the online version of the Purchasing Bulletin, an interested vendor can see the actual solicitation documents, whereas the printed version has only a listing for the solicitation," Totten said. "Online, we can post anything needed to help the vendor with the response process, such as Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, maps, diagrams, Microsoft Word documents – any file that

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Monitoring Vendor Performance Crucial to Ensure Contract Requirements Met

Ensuring that contract specifications are met to the satisfaction of the agency was the focus of a recent workshop offered by Assistant Purchasing Director Mike Sheets of the Acquisition and Contract Administration Section. At the 2012 Agency Purchasing Conference, Sheets discussed the strategies for effective communication between the agency and vendor. He also examined the importance of determining clear performance expectations and discussed the process for correcting unsatisfactory vendor performance.

Buyers Network

All of these aspects – good communication, defined expectations and correcting performance concerns – result in effective vendor relations, according to Sheets.

Communication is crucial when working with suppliers to meet our needs. However, there are restrictions as to when and who may communicate with vendors during the bid process. "The black-out period starts when the so-

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Honesty is the Best Policy in Procurement, Purchasing Director Tincher Tells Purchasers

As he spoke on Guiding Values and Principles of Public Procurement during the 2012 Agency Purchasing Conference at Stonewall Resort, Purchasing Division Director Dave Tincher emphasized a respect for the intelligence of those in the Advanced Track class.

“As I was getting ready to teach this, I struggled to find what I can tell you that you do not already know,” he said with a laugh. But his points always returned to “law, rule and the handbook,” referring to *West Virginia Code*, *Legislative Rule* and the *Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook*.

He emphasized the value of transparency and openness in the procurement process. “We disclose everything throughout the procurement process,” Tincher said. “We put everything on the Purchasing Division website. We are doing business for the citizens of West Virginia, and they have a right to know about that business.”

Tincher said that usage of the **Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook** is vital for a procurement officer. “I still refer to it every day,” he said. He said that changes are made to the **Handbook** as quickly as possible, and procurement officers are informed of those changes in a similar manner. “That is one of the attributes of good



Purchasing Director Dave Tincher emphasized that openness and honesty are paramount traits to the procurement process. Tincher said that by keeping everything transparent, it ensures a fair and impartial process.

procurement practices,” he said.

Tincher said that perceived shortcuts that circumvented the law only extended the procurement process, rather than shorten it. “The quickest way to buy is the right way to buy according to code and law 100 percent of the time,” he said. “In the question of ethics, almost everyone, I find, is just trying to do the right thing.”

It is the focus on doing “the right thing” which makes procurement with the state of West Virginia a valued and valuable process. “We should all be working to work efficiently together,” he said. “It is why impartiality in procurement is so important. Everyone who participates gets a fair shot.”

Keep Apprised of Latest Procurement Information through Website

Shortly after the Purchasing Division redesigned its website two years ago, an additional feature was added to the home page to keep procurement officers apprised on the latest developments from the Purchasing Division.

A “News, Events and Job Opportunities” banner was situated prominently in the upper half of the home page to give website visitors notices about the most up-to-date information coming from the Purchasing Division. The landing page for this link is updated regularly.

“This is another way our agency provides useful, timely information to the many individuals we work with in state procurement,” said Tony O’Leary,

PURCHASING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

This article is part of an ongoing series which details the tools and resources available for agency purchasing officers offered by the Purchasing Division.



Public Information Specialist. “We continually update and offer new resources and this webpage is an excellent way to communicate this information in a time-sensitive manner.

Whether it is news about our training programs, our annual agency purchasing conference, a statewide job

posting in our agency or changes to policy and procedures, procurement officers can readily find this useful information on our website.”

Procurement officers are encouraged to bookmark this page and can do so by visiting the Purchasing Division website at: www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase.



Purchasing Division to Focus on Vendor Initiatives to Help in Doing Business with State

With the New Year comes new initiatives. Training for state agency purchasers have long been a focus for the West Virginia Purchasing Division, but in 2013 that focus will expand to include vendors who wish to conduct business with the State of West Virginia.

On March 20, Purchasing Division employees will participate in the West Virginia Contractor's Association Expo Seminar Line-Up with a session titled "Doing Business with the State." This session will offer current and prospective vendors valuable information on how to maximize their opportunity to bid and perform work for state agencies.

The following week, on March 29, the Purchasing Division will conduct a webinar to introduce businesses to our processes and procedures. All vendors are welcome to participate in

this free webinar. Space is limited and registration is required. More information on this webinar can be found on the Purchasing Division's website at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/VendorReg.html.

Procurement officers are encouraged to share this information when speaking with vendors.

Additional vendor initiatives for 2013 include the development of mini-online training modules highlighting the state procurement process and an additional webinar scheduled for the fall.

For more information regarding the West Virginia Purchasing Division's vendor initiatives or the many agency training opportunities offered by the Purchasing Division, contact Staff Development Specialist Samantha Knapp at (304) 558-7022 or Samantha.S.Knapp@wv.gov.

Mileage Reimbursement Rate Remains at 47 Cents per Mile for State Employees

West Virginia Department of Administration officials announced in January that the state mileage reimbursement rate for privately-owned vehicles for state use will remain at 47 cents per mile.

A bi-annual review of the state's mileage reimbursement rate for privately-owned vehicles is conducted

in both January and July of each year by the Department of Administration cabinet secretary. The state of West Virginia is not statutorily required to follow the federal mileage reimbursement rate set by the Internal Revenue Service. This state rate will be in effect until further notice or after the next review is published in July 2013.

Purchasing Division Buying Staff Earns Certifications

Two Purchasing Division buyers were recently honored for completing the certification examinations for the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC). The Purchasing Division congratulates Buyer Supervisor Krista Ferrell who earned the Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO) national credential while Buyer Supervisor Shelly Murray received the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) credential.

Ferrell was among 84 professionals who received the CPPO credential upon successfully completing the examination in October. The CPPO certification marks an elite level of achievement for public procurement officials which focuses on public procurement management. To earn this distinction, Ferrell demonstrated through an application process that she met specific requisites established by the UPPCC which included formal education, work-related training, public purchasing experience and functional management experience.

Murray earned the UPPCC designation of CPPB also in October. Murray completed a similar arduous curriculum and exam to receive this designation, which focuses on public procurement practices.

UPPCC is an independent entity formed in 1978 to govern and administer the CPPO and CPPB certification programs. The CPPO and CPPB programs are highly regarded and respected among procurement professionals and employers involved in the public sector.

The Purchasing Division also recognizes Senior Buyer Tara Lyle who earned her Advanced Certification in the Purchasing Division Certification Program. Lyle completed a rigorous program designed to provide professional development and recognition to procurement officers whose job duties fall primarily under the authority of *West Virginia Code* §5A-3.

The Purchasing Division congratulates these individuals on their certification and their dedication and hard work devoted to the state procurement process.

VENDOR

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licitation is out to bid and ends when an award is made," he noted. During this time, all communication must be managed by the Purchasing Division for purchases processed through the formal acquisition procedures. "This policy is put in place to protect the state and to protect you, the agency procurement officers, from the perception that the process was influenced. By not allowing any communication, except through the Purchasing Division, all vendors are provided the same information at the same time." He described the Purchasing Division as a "disinterested third party" in the purchase of goods and services for an agency.

Establishing clear expectations is an important component to a vendor's success and the agency's satisfaction. "It all comes down to the specifications," said Sheets. "The goal is to gain a product or service to fulfill the need and mission of the agency. Oftentimes, we speak in the language of our agency, which vendors may or may not understand; therefore, you must write so that everyone knows clearly what is being sought." When preparing the specifications to which vendors respond, pay special attention to mandatory requirements. "Only make requirements mandatory for things that you can't live without," Sheets explains.

Monitoring vendor performance from the beginning to the end of a contract is essential. In some cases, it may be beneficial to establish benchmarks in the life of the contract in order to ensure the proper work is completed in a timely manner. "Look at the contract. That's the basis of your agree-

ment. In certain situations, you may need to incorporate remedies within the contract," Sheets said.

Should an agency do when it finds that work is not being completed to the agency's satisfaction? Sheets explains the process by which an agency must document its problems and resolutions. "When a problem arises, make sure that you are speaking with the right person in the organization. Sometimes the sales person may not be the right person to resolve your issue." After exhausting verbal communication efforts, Sheets suggests sending a letter to the vendor, detailing the issues and all attempts to resolve the matter. "Be sure to give the vendor a time frame of when the problem began and when you expect it to be resolved," he said.

If there is still no resolution, the Vendor Performance Report (WV-82) is to be used. "Be sure to include all documentation that substantiates the issues, attempts and any resolution that was realized," he said. "Even issues experienced under agency delegated authority should be brought to our attention, because other agencies may be experiencing those same issues. The key is documentation."

For a copy of the materials for Sheets' presentation at the 2012 Agency Purchasing Conference, please visit: http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/2012ConfPPTs/12CONF_VendorPerformance&Relations.pdf

To obtain a copy of the Vendor Performance Report, please visit:

<http://intranet.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/wv-82.pdf>

OPEN HOUSE

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and procurement officers."

Purchasing staff will be available throughout the event to meet one-on-one with procurement officers to discuss general topics or specific situations. A complimentary registration to the 2013 Agency Purchas-

ing Conference will be given to one registered attendee. Food and beverage will be available throughout the event.

Please see the April issue of the *Buyers Network* for a complete list of the Open House activities.

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helps a responding vendor prepare the most accurate response possible to the state's request for quotation."

Because a solicitation can be updated with the addendum process throughout the week, Totten said registered vendors are encouraged to check frequently for online updates. Totten said that while updates are made, original and previous documentation remains with the solicitation, ensuring the transparency of the RFQ and addendum process.

"Requirements may change, but anything posted in the Purchasing Bulletin remains to ensure the process is transparent to vendors and the public," he said. "Everything published becomes part of the history of the project."

CONFERENCE

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For the more experienced agency purchasers, the classes which were included in the Advanced Track are still being offered individually. These classes include Speed Roundtables, Writing Specifications (formerly Contract Drafting), and Question and Answer Session with Purchasing Division Staff.

More information on this year's agenda will be shared as soon as it becomes available. For questions or comments regarding the 2013 Agency Purchasing Conferences, please contact Staff Development Specialist Samantha Knapp at (304) 558-7022 or Samantha.S.Knapp@wv.gov.

GOVERNOR

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efficient and ethical manner," said Purchasing Director Dave Tincher. "It brings great pride to those of us who perform this role in our respective organizations that our profession is being recognized."

The Purchasing Division is proud to display this Proclamation in the reception area of its office in Charleston.

Current Statewide Contract Update

(As of February 15, 2013)

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 <http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/swc>. For more information, please contact your assigned agency buyer.

Out for Bid

Contract	Description	Bid Opening	Pre-bid?
PAINT13	Paint	03/13/2013	Yes
TCARD13	Travel card services	02/28/2013	No

New Awards

Contract	Vendor	Description	Dates
SBUS13A	Blue Bird Bus Sales	School buses	01/01/2013 -12/31/2013
SBUS13B	Heritage Bus Sales	School buses	01/01/2013 -12/31/2013
SBUS13C	Matheny Motor Truck Sales	School buses	01/01/2013 -12/31/2013

Under Evaluation

Contract	Description	Bid Opening	Under Eval
DIGCOP12	Digital copiers	12/04/2012	Yes
ERCYCL12F	Recycling of used electronic equipment	08/09/2012	Yes
LABSUP13	Laboratory supplies	02/06/2013	Yes
VOIP13	Voice over Internet protocol solutions	01/09/2013	Yes

Contract Renewals

Contract	Vendor	Description	Dates
ALCOHOL12	Aaper Alcohol & Chemical Co.	Ethyl alcohol	02/01/2013 -01/31/2014
FLRCOV09A	Family Carpets	Floor coverings	01/01/2013 -04/30/2014
SECSVS11C	G4S Secure Solutions USA	Security guard services	03/01/2013 -02/28/2014

Contract Renewals

Contract	Vendor	Description	Dates
MPLS07	Verizon Business	Multi-protocol label switching and virtual private network services	07/01/2013 -06/30/2014

Contracts Reviewed

Statewide contracts are reviewed approximately three months prior to the actual expiration date. During this month, the following statewide contracts for which their expiration dates are approaching will be examined.

WESTLAW10	Online Westlaw subscription services
LIFE08B	Lift, auto and truck, hydraulic

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

FILE	BUYER	EMAIL	PHONE
21	Krista Ferrell	Krista.S.Ferrell@wv.gov	558-2596
22	Roberta Wagner	Roberta.A.Wagner@wv.gov	558-0067
23	Frank Whittaker	Frank.M.Whittaker@wv.gov	558-2316
31	Shelly Murray	Shelly.L.Murray@wv.gov	558-8801
32	Tara Lyle	Tara.L.Lyle@wv.gov	558-2544
33	Alan Cummings	Alan.W.Cummings@wv.gov	558-2402
43	Paul Reynolds	Paul.Reynolds@wv.gov	558-0468
44	Guy Nisbet	Guy.L.Nisbet@wv.gov	558-8802
51	Connie Oswald	Connie.S.Oswald@wv.gov	558-2157

Interested in past issues of *The Buyers Network*?
Check them out at:

<http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/BN/bnlist.html>

Questions?...Just Ask Us!

Are you unsure of certain purchasing procedures? Do you need information on the current state travel regulations? Do you have a question regarding travel requests? Would you want to know what surplus property is available?

If you need additional information concerning any function within the Purchasing Division, complete the form below and return to the address below. You also may forward your request via e-mail.

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2019 Washington Street, East
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Charleston, WV 25305-0130
E-Mail Address: Diane.M.Holley@wv.gov

Name _____
Organization _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____
E-Mail Address _____
Need Information about _____

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