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FROM OUR DIRECTOR

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NEW LEA USER GROUP



Ellen Philpot

Beginning in October 2003, a User Group representing the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) was established in response to legislation resulting from Senate Bill 620. This user group consists of school systems from across the State, as well as P&C representatives. Since October, the group has met several times and has scheduled quarterly meetings for the rest of this calendar year. At the March 2nd meeting, the following officers were elected: Hazel Thrift (Cleveland), and Ronnie Green (Charlotte-Mecklenburg) and John Mann (Guilford) as Co-Chairmen. Additional members include: Scott Doolittle (Wake), Frankie Brinkley (Nash-Rocky Mount), Robin Vick (Tyrell), Linda Bullard (New Hanover), Sondra Wolfe and Craig Garner (Catawba); and David Clifton (Craven).

This is a working group, which has reviewed and advised us on topics related to statewide term contracts, training, E-Procurement vendor registration, and the E-Procurement implementation in general. Agenda items have included updates on P&C and ITS statewide term contracts, reverse auction possibilities, E-Procurement system updates, the certification process for LEAs, LEA participation reports, in addition to other matters. The user group members represent LEAs that have implemented E-Procurement as well as those just beginning the implementation process, so there is a broad range of levels of expertise and experience. Please feel free to contact any of these group members for input. Guilford County Schools was one of the first schools to implement the E-Procurement system. A comment by John Mann, GCS Purchasing Manager was recently made: "E-Procurement is the wave of the future. It has been very efficient for Guilford County Schools and

has resulted in getting purchase orders to vendors in a timely manner so students can better achieve academic excellence." As more and more LEAs become E-Procurement certified, and more proficient in the use of E-Procurement, John's words should be very encouraging to all of you.



Tips for Your E-Procurement Implementation

- Use the Registered Vendor Lookup tool to locate E-Procurement vendors: This tool is accessible online from the E-Procurement website, http://www.ncgov.com/eprocurement/asp/section/ep_index.asp On the left hand side of the E-Procurement homepage, you will find a "Registered Vendor Lookup" link. It is an easy way to confirm the vendor you wish to do business with has registered and agreed to the E-Procurement Terms of Use.
- Once you are live on the E-Procurement interface, remember to submit the required E-Procurement certification forms:

Three documents need to be submitted at the time of certification:

- (1) DPI E-Procurement Certification form
- (2) Unencumbered Funds Statement
- (3) Participation Report

More information on these forms can be found on the E-Procurement public schools' web page:

http://www.ncgov.com/eprocurement/asp/section/public_schools/lea_ep_prep.asp

P&C is also soliciting participants for our statewide term contract user groups. If you are interested in being a participant, please contact Ellen Philpot at (919) 807-4548.

TERM CONTRACT



Mike Brendle

Two new term contracts have been established for use by state and non-state agencies including but not limited to: private higher education institutions, volunteer fire/rescue departments and squads, cities/towns/county governmental entities and others that meet GS 143-49(6) requirements. The new term contracts are: Hazmat trailers (Term Contract number 070F) and LED Vehicle Traffic Signal Modules (Term Contract 550A).

The Hazmat Trailers come in two sizes and are intended to be used for response to terrorist attacks or some other disaster. Some items included in the trailers are: decon shower shelters, clothing, and supplies; in addition, training in the use of these items is included. Contact Jim Westbrook at jim.westbrook@ncmail.net for more information.



The LED Vehicle Traffic Signal Modules was originally designed for DOT traffic lights, and pedestrian crossing signal lights. But, now is available for use by state and non-state agencies. Prices are approximately 20% less than previous contracts. Contact mike.brendle@ncmail.net for more information.

Both contracts can be viewed at the Purchase and Contract web site URL address www.state.nc.us/pandc, click term contracts, click by numerical listing.

Effective 4/1 there will be a new statewide term contract-550A- for LED Vehicle Traffic Modules-Primarily for DOT but Cites/Towns can also use it. Prices are approximately 20% less than previous contract.



PURCHASE/FINANCING OF SCHOOL BUSES:

Based on past history, it is the intent of the State to issue a separate solicitation for the financing of the vast majority of school buses purchased from this proposed contract. This will probably not happen until the budget for replacement school buses is finalized, sometime after July 1, 2004. At that time financing proposals will be solicited on the buses awarded under this invitation for bids. In addition, based on past history, there may be some buses purchased directly by some entities, where financing will not be obtained. In those cases, the bus orders will be placed with the company(s) that was awarded that specific bus configuration under this invitation for bids.

Any procurement action taken by the State or entities is subject to change based on enacted legislation.

P&C EDUCATION AND TRAINING

David Jones



UNDERSTANDING COMMODITY CODES

North Carolina is among 30 states and 1400 government entities that utilize the NIGP Commodity/Services codes. NIGP commodity code numbers have three, five, seven and eleven-digit levels. The more digits, the more detail is provided about the product or service. A three-digit number defines a broad category or class. A five-digit number adds detail to identify a specific item. There are also seven-digit and eleven-digit numbers that further define very specific characteristics of items, but the five-digit NIGP commodity code structure is the standard for the State of North Carolina.

Our State categorizes items into 182 classes. Each class is identified with a three-digit number and an additional two-digit suffix designating the group.

Purchase and Contract's Statewide Term Contract Identification numbers are also tied to the commodity code structure. The term contract numbers reflect the numbering convention of the three-digit NIGP commodity codes. Term contracts are assigned a three-digit commodity number followed by a letter to identify the contract.

Commodity codes identify items on requisitions and purchase orders to assist in creating accurate State purchasing reports. Codes that begin with a **0-8** represent goods. With the exception of printing, codes beginning with a **9** represent services. Purchase and Contract provides a complete list of the State's commodity codes on their website: www.doa.state.nc.us/PandC. To access the list, click the drop-down menu located under the P&C Information heading and select the "Commodity Codes" option. From the returned page you may locate commodity code information using the "**NIGP 5 Digit Alphabetical Commodity Code Listing**" or the "**NIGP 5 digit Numerical Commodity Code Listing**" links. These two versions of the commodity code list allow the user to search by commodity description or by commodity code number.

The "NIGP 5 Digit Alphabetical Commodity Code Listing" allows the user to locate commodity information by item description. The alphabetical listing is intended for users unfamiliar with NIGP numerical commodity codes. Click the link to search for an item using the first letter associated with the item description. Search results will display five-digit commodity numbers along with the corresponding commodity description. Please note that the item you are searching for may be listed under a different description (e.g., car may be listed under "C" for car, "A" for automobiles, or "V" for vehicles). The "NIGP 5 digit Numerical Commodity Code Listing" link allows the user to search using commodity numbers. Click this link to display a list of three-digit commodity codes in numerical order. Locate and select the correct three-digit code to display the associated five-digit codes and descriptions.

It is important that the commodity code(s) selected best describe the item(s) being purchased. The commodity codes assist the State in numerous ways. Commodity code information is used to analyze item price data, gather statistics on frequency of use, and to run reports related to historically underutilized businesses

(HUB). Suppliers that do business with the State also use commodity codes in order to indicate the products and services they provide for both IPS and E-Procurement registrations. Commodity codes in solicitation documents direct e-mail notifications to vendors registered in Vendor Link. If the proper commodity code is not used, it is difficult to accurately report on what is being purchased.

Miles Johnson retired from his position as a Standards Engineer on April 30. We thank Miles for his fourteen years of service with P&C and wish him a most enjoyable retirement!

COMINGS AND GOINGS



P&C FAREWELLS & WELCOMES



Joey Ennis, our new Computer Support Technician, came to P&C in late April from the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, where he was Database Coordinator. Joey also served as supervisor of the 1-800-VISIT-NC Inquiry call center and as manager and coordinator of the Extranet Database Program, plus assisting with implementation of the Traveler's Kiosk Program. Prior to working at Commerce, he was Information Systems Administrator for the NC Department of Transportation, Rail Division.

James Staton joined P&C as manager of Group 3 on June 14. He has over 27 years experience in purchasing and management at the division and corporate level in the private sector. He has worked extensively with domestic and international suppliers in the global market place. James earned a Bachelors of Business Administration w/Concentration in Accounting from St. Augustine's College, Raleigh NC. He's a past member of the National Association of Purchasing Management, Carolinas

Minority Suppliers Development Council, and Advisory Council of Leadership Greensboro.

William Craig began work June 28 as a Standards Engineer. He's a native North Carolinian, a Navy veteran, and had about 25 years experience in the private sector before working at the Department of Health and Human Services as a Rehabilitation Engineer. William received his degree in engineering from the University of North Carolina.

Promotions:

Congratulations to **Tina McLamb**, who was named Outreach and Education Manager effective June 21, and **Angie Dunaway**, our new Operations Manager effective July 1.

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

CUSTOMER SERVICE

What is customer service? Even though we know there are many definitions, we think the bottom line is being able as an organization to supply our customers' wants and needs. The goal of our Division is to constantly and consistently deliver customer service that exceeds your expectations.

Good communications is the key element to providing customer service at a level that makes you feel good about the response that you receive from us.

How do we go about providing that level of service? First, we must be knowledgeable about the subject matter. We must be able to listen to your needs and be able to respond in an effective manner. This not only means responding appropriately to your questions but delivering the message in a manner that is customer friendly. Even when we don't have the answer you'd like to hear, we need to convey that message in an appropriate fashion and possibly give alternative suggestions. In many instances, it is more than just what we say, it is how we say it.

Secondly, we should never deliver a response that reflects the "CUSTOMER NO SERVICE" attitude. That is unacceptable to us as an organization if we expect you to feel like we have heard your concern and that it is important for us to respond in a professional manner.

I believe, that overall, we are responding to our customers in a positive fashion. We would appreciate your input to our managers or to me directly as to the level of service we are providing to you. It is of extreme importance to this Division for us to fulfill our mission as a service agency. We look forward to your input.



The **P&C News** is published quarterly by the Division of Purchase and Contract to promote better E-procurement practices in state government and political subdivisions.

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