



Purchasing Quarterly

Summer 2009, Volume 9, Issue 3 A Publication of the Travis County Purchasing Office, Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., Purchasing Agent

Know your Purchasing Office

By Jerome T. Guerrero

Scott Wilson

A little over a year ago, Scott Wilson became a Purchasing Agent Assistant for Information Technology (IT) purchases. In his first year with Travis County, Scott has quickly and quietly assumed his place among the purchasing staff.

Scott, a soft spoken Texan, is a Georgetown native. His father, Jim, is English but grew up from the age of six in the United States so "he has no distinguishable accent." However, Scott's late grandmother, Phyllis, had the classic English accent. She lived through the Battle of Britain and shared stories of the bombings. She used to talk about the day when the USA joined the war and said there "was joy in the streets," because everyone knew the war would be turning in favor of the Allies. His mom, Carol, was born in Arkansas but grew up in the Ganado area near Victoria, Texas. Eventually, they moved to Georgetown where they raised Scott and his older brother, Chris.

After Scott graduated from Georgetown High School, he and several of his friends went to Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) in Nacogdoches. The small group of friends grew into a group of about



30 friends that "became a second family" to him. It was through this group that he met his wife, Jennifer, a native Houstonian.

They met when they served on a student committee that addressed stu-

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HUB Program Celebrates 15 Year Anniversary

Faithful supporters and the business community celebrated the 15 Year Anniversary of Travis County's Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program on May 20, 2009.

While everyone congratulated Travis County for its commitment to extending opportunities to the HUB community, some new business representatives learned more about procurement opportunities with the County.

Stephen Elkins, Director of the Small & Minority Business Resources Department with the City of Austin, Tamela Saldana, Ph.D., Program Coordinator, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Ange McCrary, CTP, HUB Compliance Team Lead with the Comptroller of Public Accounts accepted awards for their support and guidance with the HUB

Program at the County. Additionally, several local organizations were recognized for their support of the County's HUB Program. Those recognized were:

Asian Construction Trade Association, Austin Asian American Chamber of Commerce, Austin Black Contractors Association, Capital City African-American Chamber of Commerce, Community Mentor Protégé Initiative, Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Hispanic Contractors Association, and Workforce Solutions for their support and endorsement

The HUB staff wants to thank the entire business community and Purchasing Office staff for making this a successful and memorable event.

See more photographs from the event on page 6 of the newsletter.



Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., Purchasing Agent stands ready to greet attendees to the 15 Year Anniversary



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Travis County

Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M.
Purchasing Agent

Commissioners Court

County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

Pct. 1 Commissioner Ron Davis

Pct. 2 Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt

Pct. 3 Commissioner Karen Huber

Pct. 4 Commissioner Margaret Gómez

Purchasing Board

331st District Ct. Judge Bob Perkins,
Presiding Chair

261st District Ct. Judge Lora Livingston

250th District Ct. Judge John K. Deitz

County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

Pct. 3 Cnty Commissioner Karen Huber

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Visioning Work Session for Central Campus Study

By Jerome T. Guerrero

On June 24, 2009, a Visioning Work Session was facilitated by the consultant, Broaddus & Associates, to develop a vision for the Travis County Downtown Master Plan. "The intended outcome of this work session is the preparation of a set of guiding principles, planning priorities and project values, which will guide the planning process over the next 18 months – and ultimately – the next 20 years."¹

Most of the attendees were personnel representing the many Travis County departments. The hope was the "development of a central campus appropriate for the historic significance of the area it is located in, with high quality facilities that are functional, economical and sustainable, and which symbolize democracy, justice and community pride."¹

The first part of the Study is the Needs As-

essment. Currently, Travis County's Central Campus consists of 10 downtown buildings, among them the Heman Sweatt Historic Courthouse. The study will address current usage of the central campus buildings and how to renovate them. According to



Travis County Courthouse under construction in 1930
Photo Courtesy Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Photo # C05149

several published sources, the "Austin area ranked in the top 10 lists of Best Places to Live, Cities where Americans are relocating and Best Cities to Live, Work, and play!"¹ One of the assessments of the study will be to project the population by 2030 and determine what services the population will

need.

"Public accessibility and community connection will be vital to a growing county which can serve, provide public safety and security around the downtown campus while keeping current with the changing technology, network, data storage trends and potential virtual courtroom technology."¹ ✕

¹ Quoted from the Broaddus & Associates presentation.

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dent complaints about the cafeteria food. After serving on the committee, he was reacquainted with Jennifer when she joined the group through another friend. "I remembered her face and realized I knew her from the committee." After that, they started sitting and studying together. After three to four months, friends started "giving us a hard time about going out." Their friends saw something was growing. "We were good friends first and knew each other very well. It grew and transitioned into something more before we knew it." Jennifer completed her degree in elementary education and teaches in the Leander school district today.

Scott graduated from SFASU with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He worked for an electronics firm as a purchaser, then entered the

public sector of purchasing when he joined the Harris County purchasing staff in 2001. At Harris County, he managed the Information Technology (IT) and medical equipment purchases for Harris County Healthcare District (HCHD). He enjoyed his work at HCHD because he saw the equipment he helped purchase for the hospital and how it helped people.

His main focus is now IT products and services purchases and hardware and software maintenance agreements. When you walk by his office, he is often quietly organizing and filing the numerous documents for his purchases.

Today, Scott is back near his hometown of Georgetown. Recently, he and Jennifer bought a home in Leander. Things are still in transition as they have a lot to do to get their home established. ✕

ERP Systems

Purchasing Professionals' Evolving Roles

By Vania Ramaekers, CPPB
Purchasing Agent Assistant

What is ERP? It may sound like a robot or something from a distance future but it is actually Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Today's professional purchasers will need more advanced training, certification and education for entry level positions. As professions evolve so does the need to be current with changing technology.

On May 18th, 2007 the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3106 which is the implementation of an ERP statewide system by the Comptrollers Office for the State of Texas.

ERP is defined as technology applications that improve enterprise wide decision support and operational efficiency through information integration and process improvement.

ERP, for State of Texas government means, and includes, the administration of state agency's and institutions of higher education's general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, budgeting, inventory, asset management, billing, payroll, projects, grants, human resources and procurement. The County can benefit from this legislative action by acting on what the State has learned and recommended. Some of these benefits are: using best business practices processes, eliminating duplicate



data entry, warehousing and processing, automating manual tasks, real-time data update and budget validation of financial transactions, enhanced ad hoc reporting and inquiry functionality, web-based enabled applications, a single source of data, eliminating conflicting information through out an agency, creating a transparency of government information.

These are big challenges to you, your co-workers and the public. The purchasing professional must be the leading role in all aspects because the end-users will look to you for guidance and answers. Pay attention to your response time to questions so that you can build trust. If you are not ready for the changes, it will be a very difficult time for the end-users, the public and for you.

To learn more about House Bill 3106, visit www.texaserp.org ✕

Economic Opportunity Forums

09/23/09 - San Marcos
Hill Country HUB EOF
Address: Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center IH-35 & McCarty Lane San Marcos, TX
Information: Hosted by: Texas State University-San Marcos sponsors: Texas State HUB Outreach Program, Texas State Small Business Development Center & San Marcos Hispanic Chamber of Commerce time: 1pm - 4:30 pm
Contact: Yolanda Strey phone: 512-245-2393 email address: HUB@txstate.edu

Public Corruption Investigations

Public corruption is one of the top priorities of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division and is behind only terrorism, espionage and cyber crimes. It can affect everything from how well our borders are secured, how our neighborhoods are protected, how verdicts are handed down in courts to the quality of our roads and schools. It also takes a significant toll on our pocketbooks by siphoning off tax dollars. It is estimated that public corruption costs the U.S. government and the public billions of dollars each year.

"Public corruption erodes public confidence and undermines the strength of our democracy. In investigating these crimes, the FBI can leverage tools such as undercover operations and electronic surveillance to root out those who betray the public trust," said Assistant Director Kenneth W. Kaiser of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division.

A former Michigan school official was sentenced to serve 46 months in jail and to pay

\$1.34 million in restitution for his role in a fraudulent scheme to obtain millions of dollars from the Detroit-area Ecorse Public School District, the federal E-Rate program and TCF National Bank, the Department of Justice announced on March 26, 2009.

Douglas Benit, a former assistant superintendent at Ecorse Public Schools (EPS), was sentenced in the U.S. District Court in Detroit on Nov. 24, 2008 after pleading guilty to one count each of mail fraud and bank fraud.

Among his duties, Douglas Benit was responsible for the management of the construction of multiple new facilities in the district. While hiding his affiliation with Coral Technology Inc., an Ohio corporation under his control, Benit recommended to the school board the awarding of contracts to Coral, effectively steering those contracts to his own company. Funding for these contracts came from EPS general funds, EPS construction bond funds and the federal E-Rate program. ✕

Green Purchasing

By Loren Breland, Purchasing Agent Assistant

Green purchasing is referred to by many names such as responsible purchasing, eco-procurement, green procurement and sustainable purchasing. It's a way of adding environmental considerations to the price and performance criteria used by public and private sector procurement officers to make purchasing decisions. Green purchasing includes the acquisition of recycled content products, environmentally preferable products and services, bio-based products, energy- and water-efficient products, alternate fuel vehicles, products using renewable energy and alternatives to hazardous or toxic chemicals. Most importantly, green purchasing attempts to identify and reduce the environmental impact of an organization's activities and maximize resource efficiency.

Using the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) purchasers can evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes. As of early 2008, federal government agencies are required to procure EPEAT registered computer products. EcoLogo also offers a similar standard for printers, scanners, copiers and other office equipment. Take advantage of the power management features in order to maximize your energy savings by purchasing multi-function products that may serve to eliminate the need for individual machines. The U.S. EnergyStar Program maintains an estimated sixty standards for products such as copiers, faxes, other office equipment, mail machines, computers, lighting (including traffic lights), appliances, air conditioners, heating and ventilation equipment and more. Purchasers commonly include requirements in their contract that products meet the most recent EnergyStar standard available in order to reduce their operational costs through reduced electricity consumption and decrease the volume of pollution related to climate change conditions.

Let your contract do the work by establishing minimum standards and specifications concerning environmental criteria (e.g. certain percentages of post-consumer recycled content, EnergyStar compliance, third-party certified cleaning products) to reduce the number of unacceptable products from the start. Give preference (in the evaluation) to bidders who can provide environmentally preferable procurement (EPP), and/or require all bidders to provide an EPP alternative along with other items bid. Include flexibility in your contract to require awarded vendors to add green items during the contract term. Tap the resources of your vendors. Require all awarded vendors to offer

training on the products or equipment or services they are providing (e.g. require that copier suppliers train customers on the power management features and guarantee that recycle paper will not be faulted for equipment problems; require cleaning distributors to include staff training at no additional charge). Require vendors to identify EPPs in catalogs and online ordering systems, take back products for recycling after their useful life and provide annual reports to agencies on EPP purchasing.

Part 1

Also, require awarded contract vendors to "green" their operations. Include language in the bid document that requires awarded vendors to examine their operations and suggest areas in which they may implement environmental initiatives or purchase EPPs.

This type of initiative does not create a burden on the bid process (as it only applies to vendors receiving an award), but it enables entities to increase the positive impact of their purchasing and educate

suppliers on the benefits of "greening" their operations. Such initiatives may include asking suppliers to clearly identify the recycled content of corrugated packaging on the box, use recycled content papers for marketing materials, use alternative-fuel vehicles for deliveries or equip diesel vehicles with emission-control retrofit technologies, and work toward a goal of zero waste in their warehouse, manufacturing or office operations.

Draft a Green Purchasing Policy by getting commitment for an environmental purchasing policy from your organization's upper echelon before you proceed. Take a team approach. Depending upon your size and structure, it may pay to develop your Green Purchasing Policy via committee. Go slow - don't expect to go Green overnight.

One of the obstacles to green purchasing is the work needed to research products, plan and coordinate green purchasing programs and implement sustainability efforts. Another drawback is that standards change, with new products constantly becoming available. There could be a lack of commitment or interest from upper management to provide the directives necessary for a more efficient implementation. One may encounter resistance from co-workers due to the unavailability or lack of staff education and training. A lack of expertise in environmental issues and new technologies may exist particularly with those involving technical data reporting and analysis. Conflicting or confusing information may create misconceptions about the quality and performance of EPP and services, coupled with a shortage of available time to perform necessary research and investigation. Effort is required to change the norm and work with new and existing suppliers to procure environmentally preferable products and services. ✕



Special Information

 Purchasing Quarterly

Supplement to the Summer 2009 Issue

Tips to Endure Extreme Heat

From the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

The extreme heat we are currently experiencing in Central Texas can be dangerous. Many people do not realize the limitations of the human body to endure heat. The Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department offers the following list of precautions people can take in hot weather to reduce the risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

1. Stay in shaded areas and avoid the sun.
2. Wear light clothing and a hat.
3. Never leave another person or an animal in a closed, parked vehicle.
4. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, but avoid beverages that contain alcohol, caffeine or a lot of sugar.
5. Take advantage of the cooling power of water. Fill buckets or basins and soak your feet. Wet towels and bandanas can have a cooling effect when placed on the shoulders or head. Take cool showers or baths, and consider using a spray bottle filled with cold water to cool off throughout the day.
6. Plan strenuous outdoor activities for early or late in the day when temperatures are lower.
7. Take frequent breaks when working outdoors.
8. If you are aware of elderly, more vulnerable people in your neighborhood check on them to see if they need additional assistance.
9. At the first signs of heat illness (dizziness, nausea, head aches, muscle cramps), seek a cooler location, rest for a few minutes and slowly drink a cool beverage. Seek medical attention immediately if conditions do not improve.

We all need to take precautions to beat the heat and avoid



serious health conditions such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Those at high risk of succumbing to heat related health problems need to be especially careful. Those at high risk include infants and children up to 4 years, people age 65 or older, people who are ill or who take certain medications and people who over exercise.

Monitor your physical condition and that of others you are with. It is very important to learn the signs¹ of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, a potentially fatal condition.

Monitor those at high risk. Visit elderly adults at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children also need to be closely monitored. Check with your doctor to see if certain medications can also in-

crease sensitivity to the heat

Don't forget your furry friends. Severe heat can also be a danger to your pets. If over heated, dogs and cats can suffer from heat exhaustion and heat stroke just like humans can. Make sure your pet always has plenty of fresh water. Never ever leave a pet unattended in a car. It only takes a few minutes for the inside temperature of a car to become up to 40 degrees hotter than the outside temperature. Because your dog can quickly overheat just as you can, exercise your dog in the early morning or evening, the coolest parts of the day. Extra care should be taken with dogs with thick coats, short nosed dogs and older dogs.

You can find more summer pet tips at this website:
http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/summer_care_tips_for_you_and_your_pets/

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>



Travis County

15 Years HUB

HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESS PROGRAM



1994 - 2009



Celebrating 15 Years of Diversity

