

## BUYING “GREEN”

### Smart for your Organization and the Environment

“Going green” has finally moved from being a fashionable trend to becoming the standard for conducting business. There are many organizations that have a rich heritage in sustainability and, if you haven’t already, now is the perfect time to start building your organization’s green legacy. Today, going green includes more than just recycling aluminum cans, office paper, and magazines (which can easily be accomplished by using COSTARS-17 Waste, Recycling Containers). According to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Green Procurement Policy:

**“Green,” or Environmentally Preferable Procurement (EPP), is the selection of products and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.**



The problem we encounter now is that with the popularity of labeling everything as green, we want to be certain the purchased commodity is truly environmentally-friendly.

Where does a purchaser start? What are some resources to help learn about sustainable solutions?

The following information should serve as a good starting point on your path to identifying and implementing sustainable strategies and solutions for your organization.

Choosing sustainable solutions serves more than the environment. According to Pennsylvania’s Procurement Handbook, “going green” will help to:

- Reduce the amount of toxics disposed or consumed;
- Minimize waste;
- Maximize post-consumer and overall recycled content;
- Promote the practice of reusing or recycling;
- Conserve energy or water;
- Minimize greenhouse gases;
- Support and sustain healthy communities.

In addition, EPP is socially and environmentally responsible. EPP provides sustainable solutions which can be less expensive and provide long-term cost benefits without sacrificing functionality or quality. It can also offer a competitive advantage. No matter how you look at it, going green is simply the right thing to do.

The best approach to verify green claims is to look for third-party certifications. A product’s entire life cycle needs to be assessed to ensure true sustainability efforts were made in its production. For example, in order to label a product as environmentally friendly, one needs to take into consideration the resources consumed in the manufacturing and distribution processes. How much energy and water was used? How much waste and packaging were created? Were these resources, materials and processes managed with their environmental impact in mind?



A great place to start is the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The USGBC has developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, which is a third-party certification program that benchmarks and provides the tools to achieve measurable sustainability performance for facilities. The LEED family of rating systems provides guidelines in the following areas:

**New Construction**  
**Existing Buildings**  
**Commercial Interiors**

**Core & Shell**  
**Schools**  
**Healthcare**

Architects, realtors, engineers, interior designers, construction companies and facility managers all utilize LEED to promote sustainable building and renovation projects. The LEED system focuses on these performance categories: Water Efficiency; Energy & Atmosphere; Materials & Resources and Indoor Environmental Quality.

Here’s a sample of several other third-party certifiers and organizations to look for in validating green initiatives:

Scientific Certification Systems (SCS)

[www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com)  
[ecoproducts/products](http://ecoproducts/products)

BIFMA sustainability standard  
[www.levelcertified.org](http://www.levelcertified.org)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified  
[www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)

US EPA SmartWay  
[www.epa.gov/smartway](http://www.epa.gov/smartway)

•  
ISO 14001 Environmental Management System  
[www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

•  
EcoLogo  
[www.ecologo.org](http://www.ecologo.org)

•  
Green Seal  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Scott Cross, Director Program & Systems**

In this issue of the COSTARS Connection, we have focused on the coming challenges that lie ahead for our members and the changes in our program to help our members meet those challenges.

Socially responsible and environmentally sustainable decisions are being demanded more and more by our constituents and, as procurement leaders, we must ensure responsive decisions. Our lead article on "Buying Green" provides helpful information as we meet this critical challenge.

Rising energy costs are a huge concern for state government and as we search for proactive solutions, we want to share those techniques with our COSTARS members as we offer numerous energy contracts that we hope you consider.

Information technology and vehicle purchases represented two-thirds of total COSTARS spend in 2008. We're expanding and refining our contracts in these areas as noted in separate articles on pages four and six.

Improving our own information technology resources in an effort to improve the level of service we deliver to our members and suppliers remains an important goal. We have extended efforts to provide online opportunities in the areas of reporting and program surveys. We urge our COSTARS members to take a few minutes to complete the updated on-line Feedback Survey and the New Contract Survey highlighted on page five.

As always, we pledge to continue to proactively improve our program and services to our growing membership base, which reached 6,500 in early November.

Finally, I would like to remind members to update their member profiles. We have experienced inquiries at numerous conferences and workshops from individuals claiming no knowledge of the COSTARS program. An overwhelming number of these individuals were representing organizations that were already COSTARS members! It is important that we communicate with the "right" contact person and that all relevant information is shared with colleagues. You can update your profile electronically directly from the COSTARS Members page.

## 2010-2011 ROADSALT CONTRACT *Don't be left out in the cold!*

Sign up for the 2010-2011 Salt Participation Agreement beginning in January, 2010 via our website:

[www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars](http://www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars).

To view the current 2009-2010 Roadsalt Contract, go to the CO-STARS Members page and click on the News Alert on the right.



## MANAGING YOUR ENERGY BUDGET

### State Contracts Offer Energy Procurement Assistance

With the recent announcement of the new electric rates effective January, 2010, the Department of General Services (DGS) is offering another COSTARS value-added service.

The new pricing from electricity providers is estimated to increase electricity costs from 18 percent to 37 percent, depending on the rate class. Given the tight budgets faced by many local governments, DGS is offering COSTARS members the opportunity to participate in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's State Electric Procurement Program.

In our previous newsletters, we outlined this program for bidding your electricity needs through DGS. This allows our members to compare your current pricing with that available to you through the DGS bidding platforms. This service is available at no cost to your organization. If the bid costs are competitive, you have the option of accepting or rejecting the respective offer from the approved vendor. This is a "No Lose" program for local governments which can help you manage your organization's electric budget.

The program requires that you send us your rate classes and electricity use over the past twelve months. We aggregate the information from all local governments and the state by rate class, and offer them to prospective electric generators to bid on for periods ranging from six months to three years. You can then compare these prices to your present supplier's posted default price and then decide to switch if it will benefit your organization.

DGS also offers contracts for coal, fuel, natural gas, and heating oil which are open to COSTARS participation.

For additional information please contact:

**Greg Knerr**  
717-703-2935

**Joel Shiffler**  
717-346-8179

**Walt Quade**  
717-787-4775

### Green Procurement, continued from page 1

As you look for green products among COSTARS-authorized suppliers, research and ask questions about the product itself and the manufacturer. As always, when using COSTARS, you should talk to several suppliers. A good sales representative should be able to assist you with your green questions.

Making a commitment to sustainability is a smart investment for your organization and, more importantly, for the environment. So, take some time (remember it's no longer a trend) to familiarize yourself and your organization with the variety of sustainable solutions available today. Go Green!

For more information about Pennsylvania's Green Initiative, visit [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/green\\_procurement/5247](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/green_procurement/5247) or

The Governor's Green Government Council at <http://www.gggc.state.pa.us/gggc/site/default.asp>

*(Rich Moorhead, National Office Furniture, contributed to this article.)*

# NEW REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR COSTARS SUPPLIERS

## Six-Digit Vendor Number Needed

In spring, 2007, the Pennsylvania Department of General Services (DGS) adopted the MySAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) system for suppliers of goods and services to the commonwealth. SRM is a secure, web-based system that allows suppliers to search and respond to current state contracts, manage account information, and access other collaborative functions. **Effective immediately, DGS is extending SRM to procurement suppliers participating on COSTARS-exclusive contracts.**

A critical component of SRM is supplier registration. The Supplier Registration process is available at [www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us](http://www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us). **COSTARS suppliers are required by Jan. 1, 2010, to register their business in the PA Supplier Portal and receive a six-digit vendor number.**

The "Supplier Service Center" link located on the left navigation bar contains helpful tools to provide assistance throughout the Supplier Registration. Many COSTARS suppliers have already registered and have the six-digit vendor number issued by the commonwealth. These suppliers must follow the instructions to register as an existing supplier. Even though suppliers may have registered before, it is **IMPORTANT** that the commonwealth have the most current information for each company. By registering as an existing supplier, companies are actually validating the information DGS currently has on file and modifying any outdated or incorrect information.

### Supplier Service Center Screen Page

Currently, suppliers are required to provide their Social Security (SSN), Employer Identification (EIN), or Federal Identification (FID) number on any bid submitted in response to a COSTARS-exclusive contract solicitation or to access their Supplier's Gateway. To ensure the protection of our suppliers, DGS will begin using the SRM six-digit vendor

number to administer COSTARS-exclusive contracts, rather than an SSN, EIN or FID number. Suppliers will be notified when the Suppliers Gateway is updated to using vendor numbers.

Additional benefits to COSTARS suppliers of SRM Supplier Registration include receiving E-Alert notifications of certain bidding opportunities based upon pre-selected product categories, the ability to participate in electronic bidding opportunities, and to access support functions from the Supplier Service Center.

COSTARS invitations for bids will continue to be published on the "Bidding Opportunities" section of the COSTARS website at [www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars](http://www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars).

## SIGNS, SIGNS, AND MORE SIGNS!

### Traffic Signs Contract Implemented to Address New FHWA Mandate

The Federal Highway Authority (FHWA) has mandated that all traffic signs must meet increased retro-reflectivity requirements within the next decade. This means that all Pennsylvania municipalities and counties must replace virtually all of their traffic signs over the next ten years. Based upon this fact and based upon a needs assessment survey that was conducted among our members during the spring where 54.7 percent of our members indicated they would use such a contract (the highest response rate among proposed new contracts), COSTARS #24 Traffic Signs will be released soon for bidding with an effective date as soon as the first supplier has been approved. Please visit the "Bidding Opportunities" section of the COSTARS website at [www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars](http://www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars) on a regular basis to stay informed of all upcoming invitations for bids and to download bidding documents.

See **Signs**, continued on page 6

# STATEWIDE IT SERVICES CONTRACT

**Available January 1 for COSTARS Members & Suppliers**

One of the most requested COSTARS contracts at supplier and member presentations is for Information Technology (IT) services, such as consulting, training, cabling, software development, and systems integration, planning and design. Starting Jan. 1, 2010, COSTARS members may use the Statewide Master IT Services, Invitation to Qualify Contract (IT/ITQ) available at the following link: <http://www.itqrp.state.pa.us/ITQ/ITQ/Default.aspx>.

The IT/ITQ (Invitation to Qualify) is a multiple vendor contracting vehicle specifically for IT Services (Contract # 4400004480). It allows for maximum flexibility with 14 main service categories and 31 subcategories.

The ITQ web site allows viewers to search the categories for suppliers who have completed the qualification process and who has been awarded a contract. Just click on the "Search Suppliers" link to access this area. Please note, this contract is an open enrollment contract, so additional suppliers and the categories they qualified for are added and updated on a regular basis,

The other area of interest on this site is the "Documents Library". The "Documents Library" contains important information and documentation specific to each current ITQ contract such as: Solicitation Requirements and Evaluation Processes; Instructions for Sending Bid Documents to Suppliers; Templates; Instructions for Public Posting; Contract Terms and Conditions and the Master Contract.

The ITQ Process is a two-step process to provide various types of services.

**The first step:** is a pre-qualification process, where the supplier qualifies for specific services described in the ITQ. To qualify for an ITQ contract, a supplier must meet unique qualification requirements as prescribed in each ITQ. The supplier submits an electronic proposal via the ITQ specific website. The supplier's submittal for qualification is evaluated, and if their proposal passes the criteria outlined, the supplier is qualified and placed on a statewide contract. One important note about the ITQ process is that qualification on the ITQ does not guarantee the receipt of any business to that supplier, similar to COSTARS-exclusive contracts.

**The second step** is a quoting process. This is done through a Request for Quote process, in which the COSTARS member must develop a statement of work and request a quote from those qualified suppliers. If the project is estimated at over \$50,000, the purchaser should seek quotes from all the qualified suppliers in that category.

The ITQ can only accommodate a fixed-price information technology (IT) services project. Labor subcontracting is **not** permitted under the IT/ITQ state contract. "Time and materials" type services may only be included as part of a fixed-price project under one of the following circumstances:

1. The project involves updating and maintaining software;
2. The project involves a portion of work that has no definitive timeline or deliverables that can be realistically projected;
3. The project involves the use of alternative maintenance or development that is not amenable to a fixed price format.

A link will soon be provided to the ITQ web site from the COSTARS web site.

Additional inquiries should be directed to:

**Donald H. Bauer, Jr., ITQ Administrator**

**717-787-4719**

**Email: [dbauer@state.pa.us](mailto:dbauer@state.pa.us)**

**To access the IT/ITQ site from the COSTARS Home Page, click "Invitation to Qualify"**

## COSTARS CONNECTION

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**EDITOR: Bruce Beardsley**

**Jeff Mandel, Chief Procurement Officer**  
**Scott Cross, Director, Programs & Systems**  
**Tim Fulkerson, Director, Marketing & Constituent Service**  
**Bruce Beardsley, Marketing Manager, COSTARS**  
**Dawn Eshenour, Program & Compliance Manager**  
**Taju Burden, Support Services**

Further information on the COSTARS Program is available by phone (866) 768-7827 or on the web at <http://www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars>

# HOW ARE WE DOING?

## Your Feedback is Vital to our Success

Did you know that there is a Feedback Survey on the COSTARS Members page? It has been updated and we urge all members to utilize it to help us improve the program for our members. Questions include:

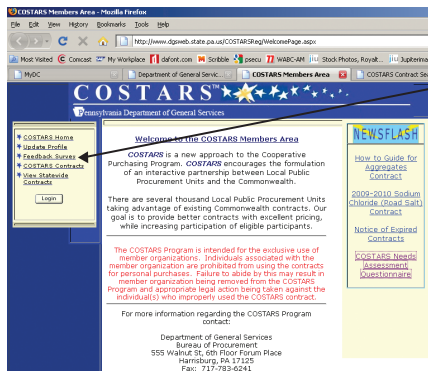
- Approximately how many times in the last year have you purchased through the program?
- What additional contracts that you would utilize are not offered?
- Can you provide an example of real cost savings using the COSTARS program?
- How would you rate the effectiveness of the COSTARS program?
- What do you like best about the COSTARS program?
- Provide suggestions to improve any aspect of the COSTARS program.

We promise to regularly review the results and make program changes appropriately. Responses are anonymous.

We are also surveying our members to determine the potential utility of several proposed new COSTARS contracts. This survey will also be found on the COSTARS Members Page, under a News Alert, in the right border. The contracts under consideration include:

**Energy Management**  
**Hybrid Vehicles**  
**Courier Services**

**Court Reporting Services**  
**Traffic Count Services/Systems**  
**Message Signs**



To participate in the feedback survey, click here.

Earlier this spring, we conducted a similar survey. Your feedback contributed to our decision to write new contracts for Municipal Work Vehicles and Traffic Signs.

All COSTARS members are urged to complete these surveys. Please do it now! It will take less than ten minutes.

# PSATS TO SPONSOR COSTARS TRAINING

COSTARS personnel will conduct COSTARS orientations at each of thirteen Newly Elected Officials workshops throughout the state sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS). The workshops will be conducted from January 23 through March 13, 2010. For further information, contact PSATS at [www.psats.org/psats\\_workshop\\_registration.html](http://www.psats.org/psats_workshop_registration.html) or 717-763-0930. The orientation provides a comprehensive overview of the COSTARS web-based program.



**COSTARS Marketing Manager Bruce Beardsley presenting at a recent workshop**

The COSTARS Marketing Team, Director Tim Fulkerson and Manager Bruce Beardsley, have been on the road all summer making presentations and conducting workshops extolling the many virtues of the COSTARS Program. Their message of lower costs and increased flexibility continues to find receptive audiences among prospective members and suppliers, as evidenced by the continuing strong and consistent growth of the COSTARS membership and supplier base. Total membership has now surpassed 6500 and continues to average almost four new members per business day! This summer, COSTARS representatives appeared before:

- PA State Association of Township Commissioners;
- 84 Lumber Marketing Team;
- Southern Lancaster County Inter-Municipal Council
- Berks County Intermediate Unit
- Pa. Municipal Authorities Association
- Pa. Boroughs Association
- Pa. Councils of Government Association
- Montgomery County Public Works association
- York County Public Works Association
- Northeastern Pa. Procurement & Technical Assistance Center
- Pa. Local Government Secretary's Association

# CURRENT COSTARS EXCLUSIVE CONTRACTS

- COSTARS- 1 Copiers
- COSTARS- 2 Office Furniture
- COSTARS- 3 IT Hardware
- COSTARS- 4 Office Supplies
- COSTARS- 5 Janitorial Supplies
- COSTARS- 6 Software
- COSTARS- 7 Foods
- COSTARS- 8 Maintenance, Repair, Operation
- COSTARS- 9 Graphic & Printing Services
- COSTARS- 10 Voting Systems
- COSTARS- 11 Toiletries
- COSTARS- 12 Emergency Responder Loose Supplies
- COSTARS- 13 Emergency Responder Vehicles

- COSTARS- 14 Recreational & Fitness Equipment
- COSTARS- 15 Waste Water Treatment-Consumables
- COSTARS- 16 Waste Water Treatment-Equipment
- COSTARS- 17 Waste, Recycling Containers
- COSTARS- 18 LED Signals
- COSTARS- 19 Medical Supplies
- COSTARS- 20 Laboratory Supplies
- COSTARS- 21 Pest Control (Pending)
- COSTARS- 22 Weatherization Materials
- COSTARS- 24 Traffic Signs (Pending)
- COSTARS- 25 Municipal Work Vehicles
- COSTARS- 26 Passenger Vehicles

# BIG CHANGES FOR COSTARS VEHICLES CONTRACT

More than 100 attendees packed the August 24 meeting of existing and prospective suppliers of COSTARS-13 Emergency Responder Vehicles in order to discuss changes in the contract.

In a June 22 letter to suppliers, Jeff Mandel, Pennsylvania's Chief Procurement Officer explained that the contract had **"expanded beyond its original intended scope,"** which was only to include fire trucks, ambulances, police cars, and some related vehicles. As such, it **"was becoming cumbersome to administer and difficult for members to peruse."** The contract is, however, very popular and has grown to include 73 suppliers. The spend on this contract in 2008 was more than \$50 million, a 101 percent increase compared to 2007. In addition, according to Mandel, **"we wanted to respond to the requests from members and suppliers to include additional vehicles like garbage trucks, street sweepers, etc."**

As a result of the input from suppliers at the August 24 meeting, we will be offering three separate COSTARS vehicles contracts.

COSTARS-13 Emergency Responder Vehicles will return to its original intent and only include vehicles used by emergency services such as fire, rescue, and police, including:

- **Command posts;**
- **SWAT/Tactical response vehicles;**
- **Marked police vehicles;**
- **Ambulances;**
- **Fire Trucks.**



COSTARS-25 will be an all-purpose work truck contract and will include:

- **Cab and chassis**
- **Pickup trucks and cargo vans**
- **Garbage trucks**
- **Recycling trucks**
- **Vacuum trucks**
- **Bucket trucks**
- **Body upfit suppliers**
- **Liftgate suppliers**
- **Trailer suppliers**
- **Crane suppliers (truck mounted)**
- **Snowplow suppliers (truck mounted)**
- **Salt/Sand spreader suppliers (truck mounted)**
- **Liquid winter maintenance system suppliers (truck mounted)**
- **Air compressors and generator suppliers (truck mounted)**
- **Hydraulic system suppliers (truck mounted)**



COSTARS-26 will include most passenger vehicles. The formal scope of the contract includes: cars, sport utility vehicles, passenger vans, full size and mini, and cross-over vehicles.

The contracts will be released for bid shortly and suppliers should visit the **"Bidding Opportunities"** section of the COSTARS website at [www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars](http://www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars) on a regular basis to stay informed of all upcoming invitations for bids and to download bid documents.

For further information, contact:

**COSTARS-13**  
**Susan Reinhold**  
**717-703-2931**

**COSTARS-25**  
**Robert Isenberg**  
**717-703-2930**

**COSTARS-26**  
**Al Robinson**  
**717-346-8181**

Members are still urged to review state agency as well as COSTARS contracts for all vehicles. Negotiation remains the key to obtain the best value for members' constituencies.

Agricultural and construction heavy equipment vehicles remain available on state contracts. Contact Commodity Specialist Rich Woodworth, **717-787-4103**, for additional information.

## Signs, *continued from page 3*

The scope of the contract will include most commonly used traffic signs and sizes, including street name signs. All signs and suppliers must be PennDOT approved and must be fabricated from an approved Type III (or higher) retro-reflective material which meets the federal guidelines. Similar to all COSTARS contracts, this is a multiple vendor contract and members are urged to seek quotes from several suppliers and to negotiate the best offer.

Members may purchase other types of signs through other contracts. For example, Message Board signs are included on state agency contract # 4400000675 Traffic Control Equipment. Many other types of signs are included within the scope of COSTARS #9 Graphic & Printing Services. There is even a state contract with a company that will assist members to purchase billboard space (#4600008608 Media Services).