

Choice Partners honors top-performing vendors

Companies with an awarded government contract available through Choice Partners were honored at a vendor appreciation luncheon in early January at Harris County Department of Education.

James Colbert, Jr., superintendent of Harris County Department of Education, thanked the vendors for upholding high standards of quality and helping HCDE serve all learners. He noted that the vendors are no different from HCDE in being dedicated to customer service.

"Our goal is to provide impeccable service to you, and in turn, we want to provide impeccable service to client school districts," Colbert said.

Choice Partners Director Jeff Drury recognized more than 70 companies for their contract use, and 32 were called out for



Facilities Sources celebrated its tenth year as a Choice Partners vendor. It currently has contracts available for construction-JOC, disaster mitigation and HVAC equipment and service.

leading in vendor contract usage. Jeremy Morgan, Millennium Project Solutions, spoke to the crowd, encouraging vendors to

rely on the expertise of Choice Partners to guide them through the procurement process.

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Attention technology users: Don't be fooled by false 'sole source' claims

Purchasing technology hardware and software takes special knowledge, so it is not uncommon to rely on technology salespeople for inside info on how to get the items needed. Frequently, technology companies have a "sole source" letter at the ready for customized software so they can provide the requested items. But "sole

source" can be easily misused.

That's why Choice Partners cooperative has multiple technology contracts with vendors who, as dealers and distributors, represent a multitude of manufacturers. See all the technology contracts available at www.choicepartners.org. ♦

Contracts for technology, facilities services and more renewed

Contracts for technology, facilities services and electrical vehicle charging stations and more were renewed at recent board meetings of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Renewed contracts for technology products and services include:

Accudata Systems; ARC Government Solutions; AVES Audio Visual Systems; Barnes & Noble Booksellers; Bass Computers; Best Buy for Business; Carahsoft Technology Corp.; CDW

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Jeff Drury, Director

Joann Nichols, Assistant Director

Trisha Jensen, Assistant Director

Greg Lookabaugh, Sr. Manager of
Facilities Planning

Karen Chesky, Contract Manager

Carol Greb, Contract Manager

Kristi Helton, Contract Manager

Mary Causey, Contract Coordinator

Jan Arnold, Client Services Coordinator

Stephen Kendrick, Contract Compliance
Specialist

Arlita Kyles, Contract Specialist

Fred Calhoun, Field Representative

Don Elder, Jr., Marketing Consultant

Jim Owens, Contract Auditor/Consultant

Janet Wachs, Membership Manager

Les Hooper
Executive Director

James Colbert, Jr.
HCDE County School Superintendent

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Find us on:



Welcome new members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved recently by the HCDE Board of Trustees include **Burleson County**, Burleson; **Celina ISD**, Celina; **Cisco College**, Cisco; **Denison ISD**, Denison; **Generations Community Federal Credit Union**, San Antonio; **Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas**, San Antonio; **city of Keene**; **Pawnee ISD**, Pawnee; **city of Prairie View**; **city of Seguin**; and **Wylie ISD**, Wylie.



New out-of-state members include **ASGHSMO Assembly Christian School**, Frostproof, Fla.; **Clay County**, Liberty, Mo.; **Loudon Water**, Ashburn, Virg., **Muscogee County School**

District, Columbus, Ga.; **Somerton School District #11**, Somerton, Ariz.; **South Miami, Fla.**; and **University of Washington**, Seattle, Wash. ♦

Updates to supply catalog

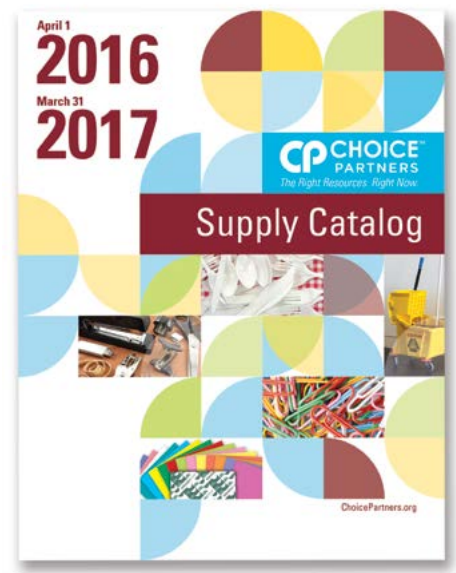
Members who have a favorite quality construction or maintenance trades vendor they Choice Partners has redesigned the Supply Catalog webpages to be more user-friendly and to include an option for members to place orders online, which are sent via email directly to vendors.

To take advantage of this option, organizations must designate an approving user(s). If you choose not to appoint an approving user, then you would continue using the Supply Catalog as you have in the past, submitting the order on your own PO form or printing the draft order and forwarding to the vendor when you are ready.

There is an option to upload your own terms and conditions with the online order.

If you wish to designate an approving user, please contact Arlita Kyles, arlita@choicepartners.org. As soon as the change has been made in our system, we will send an email to each member to confirm the change in their shopping status.

NOTE: The 2017-18 supply catalog hard bids have been reviewed by the committee of users and is scheduled to go to the board of trustees for award in February; these contracts will become effective April 1, 2017. ♦



CSP for athletic surfaces due Feb. 21

Spread the word: A CSP for JOC for IDIQ services to Furnish and Install Athletic Surfaces, due Feb. 21 at 2 p.m., is posted [on the Choice Partners website](#).

Interested vendors should [register as a supplier in the eBid system](#), then respond without delay to the appropriate bid or proposal request. ♦



Vendors appreciated for high business standards

"Sixty percent of our business today is through our Choice Partners contract," Morgan said.

"When I saw the vendors recognized last year, I set a goal to be on this list," said Stacy Duke, Butler Business Products.

The 32 vendors are:

Food vendors

Labatt Food Service, Gordon Food Service, Borden Milk, Pasco Brokerage, Tyson Prepared Foods Inc., ISI Commercial Refrigeration and Kurz & Company.

JOC – Construction and trades vendors

Brown and Root, Vaughn Construction, E Contractors USA, Horizon International Group, Facilities Sources, Construction

Masters, Millennium Project Solutions, Inc., Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing, Tandus Centiva US, SAK Construction, American Contracting USA Inc. and Library Interiors of Texas.

Supplies/commodities vendors

Dahill, Teaching Systems, Inc., Buckeye Cleaning Center, Mentoring Minds, Technical Lab Systems, Bosworth Paper, School Specialty Inc., Complete Supply Inc., Prime Systems, Challenge Office Products Inc., Butler Business Products, WEX Inc. and Ameresco Inc.

For more information about competing to become an awarded vendor partner, go to <http://www.choicepartners.org/become-a-vendor>. ♦

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"Sharing resources is what cooperative purchasing is all about," Jeff Drury, director, Choice Partners, said.



"Sixty percent of our business today is through our Choice Partners contract," Jeremy Morgan, Millennium Project Solutions, said, later referring to the assistance his business received from Choice Partners as "astronomical."



Houston-based ISI Commercial Refrigeration was honored as one of Choice Partners' top-performing vendors. "ISI provides great service – they communicate well," Jennifer Douglas, director of child nutrition, Galveston ISD, said last year.



Tandus Centiva, a Tarkett company, is a flooring services (JOC-IDIQ) vendor with an excellent track record of quality and service.



Assistant Director Trisha Jensen presents a plaque to reps from Gordon Food Service, a commercial food distributor whose contract is approved for Florida, Georgia, Kansas and Texas, as well as many other U.S. states.



"Tech-Labs has been great and has provided excellent service and responsiveness," Aaron Ellis, senior multimedia specialist, San Antonio College – Alamo Colleges, said of the training systems distributor.



"Overall, it's the best project we've ever done in our library," said Jerry Hedgecock, director of public information services, city of Brownsville, referring to the design overhaul that Library Interiors of Texas performed on the city's public library.

VENDOR NEWS

Vendors showcase variety at San Antonio meeting

More than 30 members attended our Member Training and Vendor Showcase in San Antonio on Jan. 11. Those in attendance, including school districts,



colleges and charter schools, earned CEUs while learning about what makes a purchasing co-op legal and how to distinguish between construction and maintenance.

Members also had a chance to meet with 14



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vendors, chosen from a wide variety of industries including technology, finance, facilities and more. Local, statewide and national vendors participated in the



showcase, representing the depth of contracts and other purchasing solutions that Choice Partners provides.

Next up, we will roll out our JOC Trades contract on March 8, followed by another member meeting in the Dallas-Fort Worth area on April 5. See more details and sign up at www.choicepartners.org/member-workshop-in-dallas-ft-worth-area. ♦

Technology contracts

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Government; Critical Infrastructure Solutions; Enhanced Laser Products; Exebridge; FireFly Computers; Gaggle.net; HiEd Inc.; Houston Communications; Houston Information Team; ImageNet Office Systems; Insight Investments; Insource Technology Direct; IonWave Technologies; iTech Solutions; JADE Distributing; JANGA Technology LLC; K12 Alerts; ; LyncVerse Technologies; Mark III Systems; Micro Integration; NWN Corporation; Netsync Network Solutions; PC Care; PCMG/Global Gov/Ed; PCPC Direct Ltd.; Phonoscope Enterprise Group; Phonoscope LightWave; Pinnacle Office Group; Presidio Networked Solutions; Prime Systems; Rugged Protection; Set Solutions; SHI/Government Solutions; Total Technologies; Troxell Communications; True North Consulting Group; Unified Communications; and Unique Digital. ♦

Host a Member Meeting

Want to network with our vendors and members while learning essential procurement info?

Would you like Choice Partners to hold a public training in your area?

Do you have a space large enough to hold 50-75 people?

If you answered yes to all three questions, send an email to

Joann Nichols at

joann@choicepartners.org

with the subject line "Member Meeting" or call 877-696-2122. We'll work with you to bring colleagues from nearby governmental entities together in one place.

SAVE THESE DATES

FEB. 8 - 9

VG Young School for County Commissioners Courts and Educational Exposition, *AUSTIN*

FEB. 27 - MARCH 3

TASBO Annual Conference, *AUSTIN*

MARCH 8

Choice Partners JOC Trades Rollout, *HOUSTON*

MARCH 21

2017 PPANCT Supplier Showcase, *GRAPEVINE*

APRIL 5

Choice Partners Member Workshop, *GRAPEVINE*

APRIL 13

Choice Partners Supply Catalog Rollout, *HOUSTON*

APRIL 19

Texas Library Association 2017 Conference, *SAN ANTONIO*

MAY 3

Texas Tech University Small Business Expo, *LUBBOCK*