Web Design and Dippin’ Dots contracts awarded

Refreshing your website is now easier thanks to newly awarded contracts for web design services available through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Speaking of refreshing, a new Dippin’ Dots contract through Champion Concessions for frozen desserts has also been approved to fill a void left by Blue Bell. While the popular ice cream brand has returned to select stores, it won’t make a full comeback in schools for at least another year.

Additional newly awarded contracts include:

- Art and Artwork Advisory Services;
- Automotive Equipment, Tires, Parts and Service;
- Award Jackets, Screen Printing and Embroidery;
- Energy Savings Conservation Services (ESCO);
- Food Equipment Parts, Repair, Installation, Maintenance and Small Wares;
- IDIQ Construction and Maintenance (Job Order Contracting);
- Scientific Equipment; and
- Trenchless Technology and Rehabilitation.

To see all the new and renewed contracts go to www.choicepartners.org/news.

State audit upholds HCDE’s transparency, compliance

Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) is serving students and teachers in a transparent and fiscally responsible manner, the State Auditor’s Office found during a comprehensive, six-month audit released on September 23. The rigorous assessment confirms HCDE Choice Partners position as a standard-bearer in legal compliance and gives its contract-holders further assurance about the high quality of its cooperative purchasing deals.

The State Auditor’s Office focused on three years’ of HCDE data and found that it spent property tax revenue in accordance with state law. The independent—and notoriously thorough—agency stated that HCDE “had controls in place to help ensure that it received and used funds from state grants and contracts for the intended purposes.”

As far as audits go, the language is

Hi-Mark’s roofing solutions work

The beauty of the HydroStop roofing system that Hi-Mark installs, according to owner John Follis, lies in its simplicity. The work requires but a few simple tools – a brush, a hose, a pair of scissors and a paint roller.

“‘We do work while the building is occupied,’ Follis explained. ‘It’s clean, easy, and safe, and it eliminates all the points of failure commonly seen in roofing.’

Hi-Mark’s customers are pleased with

(continued on page 4)
Welcome new members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were recently approved by the HCDE board of trustees include Arlington Classics Academy, Arlington; Beatrice Mays Institute, Houston; Central Texas Community Health Centers dba CommUnityCare, Austin; Christ Church (Apostolic) Inc., Houston; Galveston County WCID #1, Dickinson; Hill Country Bible Church, Pflugerville; Houston West Chamber of Commerce, Houston; Ingleside United Methodist Church, Ingleside; Jacksonville ISD, Jacksonville; Jean Massieu Academy, Arlington; KI Education Foundation, San Marcos; KIPP DFW, Dallas; Leaders of Texas Foundation Inc., Houston; Lindsay ISD, Lindsay; Marble Falls ISD, Marble Falls; Marian High School (NTI Career Institute), Houston; McNeil Baptist Church, Luling; Meals on Wheels and More, Austin; Momentous School, Dallas; city of Mount Pleasant; Muenster ISD, Muenster; National Wildlife Federation, Austin; New Life Church, Spring; Orange County, Orange; St. James Baptist Church, Austin; San Antonio Little Theater Inc, San Antonio; Southwest Preparatory School District, San Antonio; Starr County, Rio Grande City; Travis County Health Care Districts dba Central Health, Austin; city of Venus and Walker County Hospital Corporation dba Huntsville Memorial Hospital, Huntsville.

New out of state members that recently joined include Johnson City Central School District, Johnson City, NY; Lake Washington School District, Redmond, Wash.; Harford County Public Schools, Bel Air, Md.; Palomar Community College District, San Marcos, Calif.; and Richmond City Public Schools, Chesterfield, Va.◆

RFPs advertised

Title: Road Products (including Signage, Chemicals, Gravel, and Concrete), Equipment and Related Items
RFP#: 15/047CG
Due Date: 2 p.m. on Oct. 14, 2015

Please contact your quality vendors to let them know about this current RFP advertised by Choice Partners. Interested vendors should register as a supplier in the eBid system at www.choicepartners.org/become-a-vendor, and then respond to the appropriate bid or proposal request.◆
Hooper went on to say that energy efficiency and long-term durability were primary factors in the selection of Hi-Mark; its ability to complete the project in a short time frame made the choice a no-brainer.

“Hi-Mark was able to easily accomplish what we needed more so than what conventional roofing would have,” he said.

Last year, Hi-Mark installed roughly half a million square feet of roofing on schools. This year, the company is on track to double that. Follis credits cooperative purchasing with bringing simplicity and reliability to the government bidding process.

“My company’s utilization of the purchasing cooperative is why it’s working great for schools,” he said.

For more information about Hi-Mark, go to http://www.choicepartners.org/vendors/hi-mark-roofing-and-waterproofing or contact owner John Follis at john@hi-markroofing.com or 832-434-4170.

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50-year-old roof at Royalwood Elementary. Now, Hi-Mark is Sheldon ISD’s preferred applicator of the Hydrostop system, which has been approved by the school district’s board of trustees for use on all campuses.

“That cool roof has made a big difference,” Robinson said. “We used to have roof leaks every day, and I haven’t had a leak since.”

Robinson added that he’s satisfied with the seamless roof, which is self-cleaning, except for the drain lines.

Other school districts that have used Hi-Mark’s contract have seen energy savings ranging between 10 and 20%.

Hi-Mark’s contract for IDIQ roofing, waterproofing and moisture control—first approved by Harris County Department of Education’s (HCDE) board of directors in 2014—is a primary example of how Choice Partners contracts meet the gold standard in purchasing. When HCDE’s Westview Drive facility was in need of an update, Hi-Mark rose to the occasion.

“We had a unique situation with our roof,” Les Hooper, HCDE executive director of facilities, explained. “This was a 480,000 sq. ft. facility that was a combination of two buildings with two different roof systems.”

Hooper went on to say that energy efficiency and long-term durability were primary factors in the selection of Hi-Mark; its ability to complete the project in a short time frame made the choice a no-brainer.

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In conjunction with Balfour’s Choice Partners contract offerings of class rings, graduation products, and letter jackets for high school and college students, the company is also working to promote student development. Examples include an initiative with AT&T called “It Can Wait,” which discourages students from texting and driving. Another program called “Fresh Start” helps incoming high school freshmen know what to expect, including studying and maturing as young adults.

These Balfour programs to help educate and develop productive young people are available to schools with videos and other materials. For more information, contact Butch Milks at 832-912-8000 or butchm@balfourhouston.com.

(continued on page 4)
AFC Transportation merges, expands reach

Choice Partners contract holder AFC Transportation has merged with ECHO Transportation to create a Texas-sized transportation company: the TBL Group. The merger brings together a diverse network of territories in Texas (Houston, Dallas, San Angelo, Waco and Tyler), which will provide more resources for Choice Partners members. In addition to expanding in Texas, the TBL Group also has locations in Alaska, Florida and Wyoming.

“This merger is the largest Texas diversified ground transportation deal in our industry,” said John Ferrari, chief executive officer of AFC Transportation.

With more than 500 employees and a combined fleet of 300+ vehicles, each of the companies in the merger will keep its local branding and maintain its own identities. However, they will tie together centralized reservations, sales, maintenance and vehicle utilization in the TBL Group. In addition to minibuses, school buses, transit and paratransit buses, mini-coaches and motor coaches, the fleet includes sedans, luxury sedans (BMW and Mercedes), SUVs, vans and executive vans.

Learn more about AFC Transportation.

State audit verifies legal processes

equal to gushing, according to Jesus Amezcua, Ph.D., HCDE assistant superintendent for business services. “It is an affirmation of our work, our policies and our procedures,” Amezcua said, adding that the findings are “probably as good as it gets.”

From January to June of this year, state auditors reviewed financial information related to revenues and expenditures and examined contracts, policies and procedures. They also conducted interviews with HCDE staff. While auditors found room for improvement in some areas, HCDE has already begun implementing changes to bring its procedures up to an even higher level of excellence.

“While we recognize that we can always improve our operations, we are confident about the systems we put into place as a result of the auditors’ recommendations,” said James Colbert, Jr., county school superintendent, HCDE. “Every respected education agency should look for ways to improve services. HCDE will continue to serve our students, teachers and schools as we support the educational needs of the largest county in Texas.”

View full report.

Come visit with us at these events:

**OCT. 2-4**
Texas Assn. of School Admin./Texas Assn. of School Boards Conference, AUSTIN

**OCT. 5-8**
County Judges and Commissioners Conference, SAN MARCOS

**OCT. 20-23**
Texas Assn. of County Auditors Fall 2015 Conference, MONTGOMERY

**OCT. 22**
Choice Partners School Nutrition Show, HUMBLE

**OCT. 23-26**
Amer. Assn. of School Business Officials, GRAPEVINE

**OCT. 28-30**
Texas Charter Schools, SAN ANTONIO

**OCT. 30**
Choice Partners Annual Exhibit, HOUSTON

**NOV. 11**
Texas Assn. of School Business Officials Safety/Texas Facility Masters Conference, SAN MARCOS

**NOV. 11-13**
Texas Public Purchasing Assn. conference, SAN MARCOS

See recent announcements about Choice Partners on the home page at www.ChoicePartners.org