

Contracts awarded for insurance and more

New contracts for exterior building cleaning, insurance, modular buildings and produce items were awarded at the May 2015 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

Newly awarded contracts



Exterior Building

Cleaning: Americlean; Hardy & Hardy Inc; and Mid-Continental Restoration Co Inc;

Insurance and Third

Party Administration Services: Brown & Brown Insurance Services of San Antonio Inc dba Alamo Insurance Group; Financial Benefit Services LLC (FBS); Curtis M. Finley dba Finley Financial Services; TCG Group Holdings LLP dba JEM Resources Partners; TRISTAR Insurance; and U.S. Employee Benefits Services Group LLC;

Modular Buildings and Other IDIQ

Related Services: Aries Building Systems LLC; Industrial Laminates Corporation dba ILCOR Builders; M Space Holdings LLC; McGrath Rent Corp and Subsidiaries dba Mobile Modular Management Corporation; and Palomar Modular Buildings LLC; and

(continued on page 4)

Buy or Rent Check out what's unique

Holding special events, putting up or taking down four million decorative lights, or replacing lights using a specialized lift that self-levels on uneven surfaces are jobs that are made easier using the Choice Partners United Rentals contract. Unusual occurrences or emergencies are times people naturally think about renting equipment.

"The time they really need us are odd or are emergencies," said Brad Laws, senior manager, state and local sales, United Rentals Government Solutions. "That's where United Rentals really fits."

Gabriela Santana, government sales specialist, United Rentals, noted that people do take that seriously, as she has been called at 1 a.m. when a high school had no power. She was able



The Teupen lift is available from United Rentals.

to get a generator to the site in time for school to open later that morning.

"I told them they could call me any time and they believed it," said Santana with a smile.

The Choice Partners contract also includes rental of unique equipment, purchase of equipment, and on-line capability to track rentals and rental history.

(continued on page 3)

Commodity Processing What's for lunch?



Millions of lunches are served to students every day, thanks in part to Choice Partners cooperative. In Harris County schools alone, more than 85 million lunches are served annually that include food processed by Choice Partners contract holders and delivered from schedules coordinated by Choice Partners

(continued on page 4)

**WORKSHOPS: JULY 15 - HOUSTON and JULY 22 - EAST TEXAS
PREPARE FOR DISASTER WITH CHOICE PARTNERS**

See details at <http://www.choicepartners.org/events.php>



The Right Resources. Right Now.

- Derek Gillard, *Director*
- Joann Nichols, *Assistant Director*
- Trisha Jensen, *Assistant Director*
- Greg Lookabaugh, *Sr. Manager of Facilities Planning*
- Karen Chesky, *Contract Manager*
- Carol Greb, *Contract Manager*
- Melinda Perales, *Contract Manager*
- Mary Causey, *Contract Coordinator*
- Laci Oettmeier, *Food Contract Coordinator*
- Jan Arnold, *Client Services Manager*
- Arlita Kyles, *Contract Specialist*
- Fred Calhoun, *Field Representative*
- Luis Dueno, *Field Representative*
- Don Elder, Jr., *Marketing Consultant*
- Jim Owens, *Contract Auditor/Consultant*
- Janet Wachs, *Field Representative*

Les Hooper
Executive Director

James Colbert, Jr.
HCDE County School Superintendent

6005 Westview, Houston, TX 77055
www.choicepartners.org
877-696-2122

Find us on:



Leader's Choice is prepared by
HCDE Client Development Services



Responses will determine services

If you haven't already, please respond to the Choice Partners membership survey. An email was sent with a survey link in mid-May. If you did not receive that email, please go to the link below to respond. Your input will help Choice Partners continue to improve the services/contracts offered to members.



https://hcde.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cPamCqPE5Z4C3rf?Q_DL=ba0QnOakcEIF6QJ_cPamCqPE5Z4C3rf_MLRP_ewA5NOvNtKWh7WI&Q_CHL=email

Respondents who complete the survey will have the choice to be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card (valued at less than \$50) provided by one of our vendors. ♦

RFPs advertised

Please contact your quality vendors to let them know about current RFPs/CSPs advertised by Choice Partners. Interested vendors should go to www.choicepartners.org/become-a-vendor and register as a supplier in the eBid system, then respond to the appropriate bid or proposal request. ♦

Agriculture/Livestock Supplies and related items	15/036 MP	June 16, 2015
Food Equipment, Parts, Repair, Installation, Maintenance, Small Wares and related items/services	15/034TJ	June 19, 2015

New members join

Choice Partners welcomed the following new members in when contracts were recently approved by the HCDE board of trustees: **Bishop Garriga Middle School**, Corpus Christi;

Brownsville Navigation District of Cameron County, Brownsville;

Canyon ISD; Coastal Child Nutrition Services, Lufkin; **Falls County Appraisal District**, Marlin; **First United Methodist Church of Beeville; Food For Growth**, Houston; **town of Flower Mound; city of Grand Saline; city of Grapevine; Highland Park ISD**, Dallas; **Houston First Corporation**, Houston; **Johnson County**, Cleburne; **Keller ISD; March of Dimes Foundation**, San Antonio; **New Braunfels ISD; Normangee ISD; Oakwood ISD; Randolph Field ISD**,

Universal City; **South Brazos County Fire Department**, College Station; **Sugar**

Grove Church of Christ, Meadows Place, **Sweet Grass County**, Big Timber, Mont.;

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; and **University of Houston - Clear Lake**, Houston.

Other out-of-state entities that recently joined include: **City of Burbank**, Calif.; **College of DuPage**, Glen Ellyn, Ill.; **Bethel School District**, Spanaway, Wash.; **Cartwright School District 83**, Phoenix, Ariz.; **Federal Way Public Schools**, Federal Way, Wash.; **City of Gray**, Georgia; **Hanover County**, Hanover, Virg.; **University of Tennessee**, Knoxville; and **Webster Central School**, Webster, NY. ♦



Buy or Rent: United Rentals has it all *(continued from page 1)*



Lifts from United Rentals are used to put up and take down four million lights for the annual Prairie Lights Christmas Park custom displays in Grand Prairie, Texas.

Annual Maintenance

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD in the Houston area learned from Santana that United Rentals is one of the few places that carries a specialized Teupen lift, known for saving manpower and time. Carey Ramsey, CFISD facilities supervisor, planned ahead and will have it for two to three weeks in July. He plans to use the lift to replace lights above the seats in the high school auditoriums. It will fit up aisles and self-level, so it only has to be set up in four locations to reach the lights above the auditorium seats.

"It looks really neat," said Ramsey. "We'll remove just a few seats for the outriggers, but it will be a lot less work than building a lift, moving it and manhandling it down the steps."

He anticipates that they can get the work done much faster and more economically than the single-man lift, which takes three men to put together and move around.

"We haven't used it yet, but are hoping it will work," said Ramsey. "We're keeping our fingers crossed!"

Special Events

The city of Grand Prairie in the DFW area rents boom and scissor lifts from United Rentals for their Prairie Lights Christmas Park, which showcases four million lights in two miles of large custom displays in Lynn Creek Park. With 190,000 visitors enjoying 40 days of lights, fabulous food, carnival rides, a laser show, Santa and Santa's gift shop, "the event is absolutely wonderful," according to Beverly Grogan, Grand Prairie's community events coordinator.

"United Rentals has been a very good partner through the years," said Grogan. "They are good and reliable and if we have any problems they get right on it."

She was grateful that there were no problems -- when you have a whole team of people setting up, a boom that doesn't work can delay a lot of production time!

"One thing about getting equipment from United Rentals, you know it's been taken care of," said Conner.

"This year was so smooth," Grogan said.

"There is value in rental, and that's where we thrive," said Laws. "That's our specialty."

Purchase used equipment

Cory Conner, public works director from Sweet Grass County, Mont., might argue the point, as they purchased a used loader using the contract and saved a bundle.

"It was a very positive experience," said Connor. "United Rentals really bent over backwards to make sure we got what we wanted."

Finding what they needed and being able to use a government contract for it was a winning deal for the county; Conner said it saved them about \$140,000.

"It saved us a lot of money," said Conner. "[It] is a really nice, well kept up machine. One thing about getting equipment from United Rentals, you know it's been taken care of," Conner said. "It's been working great!"

"It was really nice to be able to work with

United Rentals and Choice Partners; we were able to make everybody feel comfortable."

With 880 locations in the U.S. and Canada, there are many locations to serve Choice Partners members nationwide.

Search for rental items in

- **general equipment;**
- **power and HVAC;**
- **pumps and fluid handling;**
- **trench safety and shoring;**
- **tools** (air, power and hand); and
- **supplies.**

For more information, go to <http://www.choicepartners.org/vendors/united-rentals-2> or call 877-874-4468. ♦

Commodity Processing: *What's for Lunch?*

(continued from page 1)

staff under guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

With more than 40 food manufacturers holding an HCDE-awarded commodities contract, Choice Partners cooperative offers many popular menu items, all produced according to the USDA nutrition guidelines. School districts choose the manufacturer and the type of unprocessed donated food commodity to be processed into healthy menu items that are then served in their schools. Truckloads of bulk product (e.g. chicken, pork, beef, fruits, vegetables and staples) are shipped to a manufacturer that follows USDA guidelines to process the commodity into nutritious prepared foods. These are delivered to a warehouse and then stored and loaded into trucks to be delivered to the school districts.



Choice Partners coordinates these truckloads to be processed, which gets the food from the plant to the tray.

While the majority of commodity contract users are in the greater Houston region, Choice Partners has member use from the valley, Dallas-Fort Worth and other regions. When a district cannot order a whole truckload (which is a requirement), Choice Partners collaborates with other food cooperatives and TDA to build a full truck load. The food commodity processing program offered by Choice Partners increases variety for students, while stretching school district food dollars.

For more information, contact Trisha Jensen at Trisha@ChoicePartners.org . ♦

Blue Bell missed

Students may likely miss having their Blue Bell ice cream, juice bars and other products through the 2015-2016 school year, as the company gradually restarts production after listeria was found in a Blue Bell production facility. Officials are predicting that it will be 2016-2017 before the school deliveries resume.

Blue Bell has been a valued awarded contract holder at Choice Partners for more than a decade. The Choice Partners Blue Bell contract has been popular with school districts, as Blue Bell reformulated their products to meet nutrition guidelines a couple of years ago and made weekly deliveries.

“We are looking for possible options in the interim,” said Trisha Jensen, Choice Partners assistant director. “But there aren’t many companies that can meet the low-fat, low-sugar, nutrition guidelines.”

“We renewed this contract so when Blue Bell is ready to distribute again, our members can immediately access their products,” said Derek Gillard, Choice Partners director. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JUNE 10-12, 2015

Texas Assn. of School Business Officers Conference, *KERRVILLE*

JUNE 15-17, 2015

South Texas County Judges and Commissioners Conference, *BEAUMONT*

JUNE 17, 2015

Texas Assn. of Community College Business Officers (TACCBO) Conference, *FORT WORTH*

JUNE 18-19, 2015

South Texas Assn. of School Maintenance Officials, *SOUTH PADRE ISLAND*

JUNE 21-24, 2015

Texas Assn. of School Nutrition, *GRAPEVINE*

JUNE 24-26, 2015

NAPM Rio Grande Valley Chapter summer conference, *SOUTH PADRE ISLAND*

JUNE 25, 2015

Texas Public Purchasing Assn. Momentum conference, *MONTGOMERY*

JULY 6-9, 2015

North and East Texas County Judges and Commissioners conference, *WACO*

JULY 15-HOUSTON JULY 22-ORANGE

Prepare for Disasters with Choice Partners

See all upcoming events at www.choicepartners.org/events.php

Contracts renewed

(continued from page 1)

Produce and Other Specialty Items

(effective Aug. 1, 2015): Anyway You Slice It Inc dba Chef’s Produce; Brothers Produce; Hardie’s Fruit & Vegetable Co Houston LP; Scarmardo Produce; and Third Coast Fresh Distribution.

Renewed contracts

Contracts for cafeteria and child nutrition were renewed and are effective Aug. 1, 2015. Other contracts were renewed and are effective immediately. View all the renewed contracts at www.ChoicePartners.org . ♦