

# eVA Connections

March 2008 Issue 1

Virginia's Total e-Procurement Solution

[www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov)



## Welcome To Our First Issue

Welcome to eVA Connections, an e-newsletter published by the Bureau of e-Procurement, Division of Purchases and Supply, Department of General Services. eVA Connections brings together the businesses, state and local government buyers, other public bodies, and various public service officials, who contribute to eVA's success. eVA Connections will highlight various eVA tools, users, and experiences, in celebration of the value that e-procurement brings to the Commonwealth.

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## eVA: Connecting Small Business To Virginia Government Contracting

Small businesses face many struggles--limited cash flow, often operating with very few employees, and juggling the need to stay competitive with the goal of making money. Public sector, or government contracting, is a market that interests small businesses for two reasons: Customer stability and long-standing business relationships.

In the past, Virginia businesses, particularly small, women and minority owned businesses, faced difficulty learning about business opportunities with Commonwealth government. Prior to eVA, businesses reported challenges not only in getting to the information about possible contracts, but also



reaching the decision makers for those contracts.

In addition, opportunities and other information about Virginia government purchasing were announced or posted in a variety of locations which were not easy to access, especially for small businesses with limited resources.

Businesses also had to approach individual agencies separately for information on opportunities. And local governments and educational institutions were another level of purchasing that was hard to reach.

eVA has changed all that. eVA, Virginia's electronic government purchasing system, provides open access and one point of entry for small businesses who are interested in selling to Virginia state and local government.

Through eVA, businesses can easily connect to bidding opportunities, statewide contracts, buyer contact information, and activity reports that indicate which agencies buy their product or service—a collection of information for purchasing activity all over the Commonwealth.

Businesses which register to become an eVA vendor—the term for your company when you sell a product or service to us—enjoy many options for creating a presence for their company, on the eVA site. **(Continued on page six)**

# Augusta County Wins Big With eVA

In 2003 Augusta County was looking for a way to reach a larger supplier audience with their bids and contracting opportunities. In rural areas, purchasing with public funds can be a real challenge.

“Sometimes it was hard to get the minimum number of quotes required for a purchase,” explains Crystal Weller, for-

merly Augusta County Purchasing Agent. *\*See note at the end of this story.*

Crystal was intrigued by the idea of electronic commerce, and had been reading about how it allowed buyers “virtual” access to large vendor lists, increased competition, and streamlined purchasing tasks. But the cost of developing a web-based purchasing site, or hiring consultants to do so, was prohibitive.

“Also, a few of my vendors had already joined eVA, and had established electronic catalogs. They encouraged me to take advantage of this new easy way to buy from them,” she explained.

eVA was designed with local governments and public bodies in mind—to allow smaller entities to benefit from an e-commerce economy of scale. To date, almost 500 local governments and public bodies use eVA for their purchasing. The list

includes cities, counties, public schools, fire and emergency services, authorities, and more.

“When I found out eVA would be conducting a buyer training class at Blue Ridge Commu-

nity College in Weyers Cave, I had to go, to see what it was all about.” What Crystal learned, was that Augusta County could use eVA for no charge. And she was so

excited by the

software demonstrations in the class, she immediately made arrangements for Augusta County to sign up with eVA as a local government user.

“I couldn’t think of a reason not to join eVA,” Crystal said. “It was free. And it connects me to a vast market of vendors I could never reach myself. Furthermore, I get much better pricing through the increased competition, which saves money for Augusta County tax payers.”

Among eVA’s purchasing tools, Crystal uses Quick Quote, the Virginia Business Opportunities (VBO) page, and some of eVA’s data tracking reports that help manage and

analyze purchasing activity. “I really like the electronic catalogs that “punch out” from eVA directly to the vendor’s shopping site” she added.

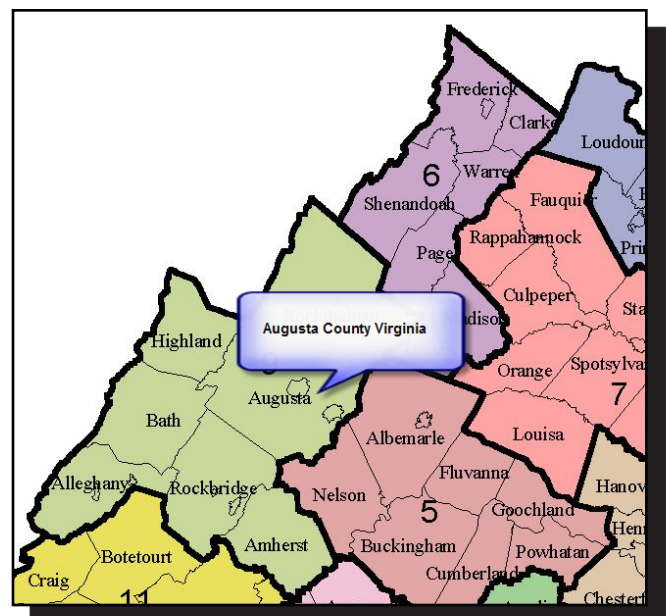
“One of the best things about eVA is the support you get as a buyer,” Crystal explained. “eVA Customer Care has given me great support—whether helping with forgotten passwords or showing me how to navigate the site,” she said. Crystal hopes to grow with eVA. “I’d like to eventually have at least one buyer in every county department registered,” she said.

*\*As of January 2008, Crystal Weller took a new position as Senior Buyer with the City of Charlottesville. Good luck, Crystal!*

*“I couldn’t think of a reason not to join eVA. It’s free. And it connects me to a vast market of vendors I could never reach myself.”*

Crystal Weller  
Purchasing Agent  
Formerly With Augusta County \*

**SIGN UP!** Want to join eVA as a buyer for local government or other public body? Go to [www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov), and click the “Sign Up” tab in the center of the home page.



# Local Governments Save Time And Money With Statewide Contracts

Local governments can save time and money using established statewide contracts. eVA features more than 300 statewide contracts on goods and services, and most can be used by local governments and other public bodies.

These contracts have already been competed, feature volume pricing, and give local governments and other public bodies an easy, direct way to make major purchases.

*“eVA is extremely user friendly... I recommend eVA to any purchasing officer who doesn't have time to waste.”*

Ann Marie Hatchell  
Purchasing Officer  
County of Henrico

Why spend time looking for sources and doing your own pricing when you can buy the easy way using eVA statewide contracts?

## Benefits Of Using Statewide Contracts

- competitively awarded statewide pricing
- fewer steps in the buying process
- reduced administrative procurement costs
- favorable state contract terms and conditions
- use of eVA for order placement 24/7

Ann Marie Hatchell, Purchasing Officer with the County of Henrico, has found eVA's Vehicle contract very beneficial for her locality. "I have found using eVA is a very expeditious means to purchasing the county's fleet vehicles. eVA is extremely user friendly, in addition to the fact that the state contracts are awarded for the absolute best pricing, reducing the bottom line, generating a substantial cost savings for tax payers. Additionally, supplier commitment to these contracts is outstanding. I recommend the process of purchasing through eVA to any Purchasing Officer who doesn't have time to waste."

## How Do I Find Out What Contracts Are Available?

To access eVA's full list of statewide contracts, visit [www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov) and select "State Contracts" from the center of the home page. Search the list by keyword or NIGP commodity code. A

complete electronic profile of each contract is available here, including contracting officer, terms and conditions, and other pertinent contract information. Questions about using a specific contract should be directed to the noted contracting officer.

## Did you know?

The primary purpose of establishing statewide contracts is for use by the 171 state agencies in the Commonwealth. But these contracts are not just for state agencies. Other public bodies may also take advantage of statewide contracts.

## Who can use DPS statewide contracts?

- Cities, towns, counties
- Higher education institutions
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Political subdivisions
- K-12 Public Schools
- Community Service Boards
- Planning District Commissions

## What's available?

These are a just a few of the more than 300 contracts:

- Office supplies
- Vehicles
- Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO)
- Laboratory supplies
- Ammunition
- Body armor
- Carpet

## Need Help?

Contact one of our local government account executives:

*Debbie Field*

804-786-1074

[debbie.field@dgs.virginia.gov](mailto:debbie.field@dgs.virginia.gov)

*Bob Pareene*

804-225-3354

[robert.pareene@dgs.virginia.gov](mailto:robert.pareene@dgs.virginia.gov)

## Quick Quote: Catchy Name, But What Is It?

How can buyers get quick pricing from a variety of vendors for small dollar purchases?

How can vendors find out about those opportunities and bid on them electronically?

The answer is Quick Quote, eVA's sourcing tool used for fast, unsealed, informal, small dollar procurements.

Quick Quote lets buyers get objective pricing from as many vendors as possible, ensuring open competition, and spawning new vendor relationships

For vendors, Quick Quote provides easy access to new Virginia government business opportunities allowing vendors more direct contact with their customers, and an equal chance to grow their business in the eVA marketplace.

## How Does Quick Quote Work For Buyers?

Buyers enter key information about their purchase such as commodity code, specifications, and service area. Then eVA builds a vendor list and sends an automated fax or email notice, for vendors that ask for electronic notification.

Buyers can add vendors not on the initial vendor list by using the "ad hoc" feature. One cause for not making the initial

list could be that the vendor did not have the matching commodity code.

Quick Quote is mandatory for state purchases between \$5,000 and \$50,000. It builds a bidder's list, is easy to use, and can publish award information electronically with a simple checkbox.

*"Quick Quote saves our buyers the manual work of finding and notifying vendors, by using automation to match and notify prospective bidders."*

*Erikka Veney  
eVA Vendor Support Manager and  
Quick Quote Lead*

## How Does Quick Quote Work For Vendors?

Vendors with matching commodity codes and service area receive either email or fax notification of the bid, depending on the settings in their vendor account.

Quick Quote and other eVA "electronic" tools have eliminated a significant historic barrier to success for small businesses—lack of easily accessible information on business opportunities.

*"Quick Quote has really opened doors for small businesses," says Erikka. "Gone are the days when vendors had look for state business by going door to door," she adds. "Now the business opportunities go right to them."*

"Businesses can't bid without access to the opportunities," Erikka says. "Quick Quote has increased SWaM participation in small purchases by 30%," she adds.

## Erikka's Tips For Vendor Success

*To assure maximum contact by the eVA system, vendors are encouraged to select "statewide" or "10" as their service area, as this is most commonly used for Quick Quote opportunities.*

*Commodity code selection is also critical, as this drives which vendors are pulled into a bidder's list.*

*While both "Premium" and "Basic" registration cost the same--\$25 annually—only "Premium" guarantees receipt of all posted business opportunities. "Basic" registration is available for vendors wishing to limit email or fax contact.*

If you have questions about Quick Quote or your vendor account settings, contact:

*Erikka Veney  
erikka.veney@dgs.virginia.gov  
804-225-3141*

# The Office Inc. Boosts Business With eVA Tools

A typical work day for Sarah Baltz goes something like this. Coffee...log into eVA...check eVA Quick Quotes...review eVA electronic orders...check inventory...update eVA punchout catalog...phone calls...sales

or trying to market by fax and email to make buyers aware of her company. With eVA, her presence as a supplier, and her capabilities are readily available to more than 12,000 eVA buyers.

out eVA's workflow tools.

## More Time For The Big Picture

Selling and order processing are just part of running a business. Small business owners also have to manage the books, deal with HR and labor issues, and keep up with changes and trends in their industries.

"Since eVA notifies me of business opportunities, streamlines orders and bidding, I spend less time on going after business, and more time going to my own industry trade shows. This helps me stay more competitive, not just in this market, but private sector, as well."

"eVA is the biggest thing to happen to our business," Sarah explains. "One of the most important things we did is develop an online catalog that lets our customers "punch out"

from the eVA site, and shop directly from our website," Sarah explains. "My buyers really like the con-



"My volume has increased 75%. And I'm doing business with a wider variety of agencies," she explains.

## Easier Workflow

Before eVA, her orders also came in mixed fashion. Some by phone, some by fax. And in a variety of formats.

"It means a lot to my business that now all the orders have a uniform appearance and consistent format, regardless of which agency they're from. It's a lot easier to manage my workflow,"

calls....pull eVA orders....invoice customers...run eVA reports.

"Not only has my business increased since I registered with eVA," Sarah Baltz, President of The Office Inc. explains, "but I really depend on the tools in the system to get my day-to-day work done."

## Better Connection To Customers

Sarah and her team at The Office Inc. have definitely realized the benefit of eVA's electronic communication flow.

Before eVA, Sarah faced time consuming door-to-door calls or cold calling by phone,

she adds.

"And I love how easy it is to summarize my electronic orders using eVA reports," she adds. "Also, I can easily capture a his-

tory of my orders, and keep accurate track of delivery details, spec changes, change orders, and the like."

The Office Inc. employs six people. Managing sales, marketing, and orders for an entity the size of the Commonwealth would be a daunting task with-

*"Not only has my business increased since I registered with eVA," Sarah explains, "but I really depend on the tools in the system to get my day-to-day work done."*

Sarah Baltz, Co-Owner and President  
The Office Inc.

venience of the punch out catalog because eVA creates their purchase order for them—directly from their shopping cart on my site. I really wanted to take advantage of this to make things easier on my buyers," she explains.

**(Continued on page six)**

# eVA: Connecting Small Business To Virginia Government Contracting (Continued from page one)

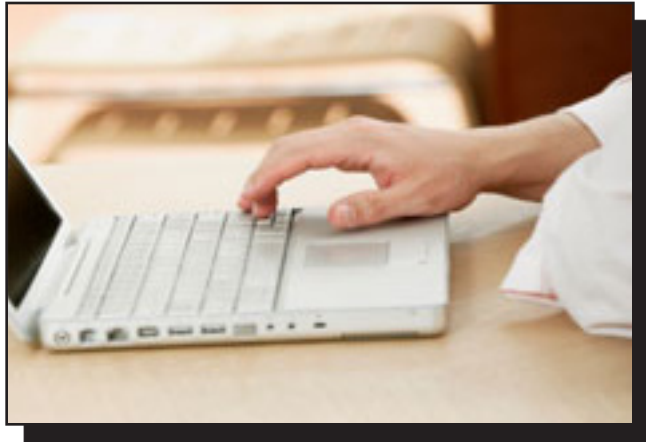
Electronic catalogs, electronic quoting tools, and many useful directories and reports enable even the smallest business to have an equal chance at trying to win a Virginia government contract.

Award notices and public bid tallies are made available in an easy, one-stop location, saving businesses the time and effort to chase details by phone or door-to-door.

Because it is so open, eVA has also increased participation by small, women and minority businesses by an average of about 30%, when compared to traditional purchasing methods.

Other benefits are on the buyer's side. Before eVA, buyers had a variety of methods for reaching the vendor community—but none was as efficient, open and fair as eVA—in connecting them to more vendors than ever, with specialized pricing tools, that help buyers streamline and automate the purchasing process.

The Commonwealth is committed to an open and fair process for our government purchasing, and eVA has created one community, where vendors and buyers can reduce time and effort for purchasing transactions, and where both sides have easy, one-stop access to the resources they need.



## The Office Inc. Boosts Business (Continued from page five)

Later Sarah added a static catalog, which is helpful when buyers are doing general searches.

There are two types of catalogs, static and punch out. For more information on catalogs, eVA vendors may contact Vicki Beasley, Catalogs Manager, [Victoria.beasley@dgs.virginia.gov](mailto:Victoria.beasley@dgs.virginia.gov) or 804-692-0891.

“This is a small, family operated business, and I want to continue what my parents started,” she says. In 1980, Sarah’s parents, Joe and Sarah Dziuba, purchased Walter D. Heindle, an existing office supply company which had been in business since 1954. They changed the name to The Office Inc. “In 1997, when our father retired and our mother passed away, my sister, Mary, and my brother, Jay, and I inherited my parents’ interest and took over the company,” she explains.

Jay Dziuba is vice president and is responsible for warehouse and wholesale activities. Mary Grigg is secretary/treasurer and is responsible for accounts payable and payroll. The company has a total of six employees, including the officers.

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