

COSTARS Connection

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Tom Wolf, Governor
Curt Topper, Secretary



COSTARS Member Survey Results Are In!

By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Recently, COSTARS members were surveyed to determine what types of contracts they may need, as well as their level of satisfaction with the COSTARS Program, its suppliers and the program staff.

An impressive 539 members responded to the survey; including representatives from: townships; boroughs; public authorities/commissions; school districts; fire and ambulance organizations; non-profit health and educational institutions; cities; counties; and other non-profits.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in this survey! Your feedback is important and helps us to determine what new contracts may be the most beneficial to our membership. It also assists us in our efforts to make ongoing improvements to the COSTARS Program, the website and the service we provide to our members.

Below is a summary of survey results and actions the COSTARS team plans to implement within the next year.

Possible New Contracts

- **51%** of respondents said they would use a GPS Systems and Services contract including: tracking devices; navigation systems; automotive telematics systems; and service.
Action: The COSTARS team will begin investigating the possible development of this contract and updates will be forthcoming when further advancements have been made.
- **53%** of respondents expressed the need for a contract that offers consulting/bidding services for waste disposal assistance in soliciting bids for waste disposal that might include: tires; hazardous substances; recycling; and municipal, industrial, electronic and fracking waste.
Action: The COSTARS team will begin investigating the possible development of this contract and updates will be forthcoming when further advancements have been made.
- **25%** of respondents said they currently use COSTARS-participating statewide Bituminous contracts for road oil, plant mix and cold mix, while **75%** do not use these contracts because they:
 - Were not aware that the contract was available.
 - Purchase these materials from another source.
 - Do not have a need for Bituminous material.
 - Do not have a road crew to apply the material.**Action:** A follow-up survey will be sent to COSTARS members for additional feedback regarding Bituminous material contracts.

New Contract Suggestions

We asked respondents to provide their suggestions for other new materials and consulting services-type contracts that may be beneficial to a broad section of COSTARS members.

- Architecture services
- Automotive leasing
- Billing for service, e.g., ambulance billing for a percentage or flat rate per bill
- Bridge engineering & consultation services
- Bridge repair/replacement
- Building maintenance (roof repairs, electrical, plumbing)
- Building/facility energy audits
- Business Phone Services
- Cafeteria
- CCTV
- Civil engineering services
- Cloud backups
- Commercial replacement windows
- Concrete /concrete work/sidewalk replacement
- Construction of municipal facilities, parks, etc.
- Contractor services
- Credit or Pcard
- Drain tile
- Dust control materials
- Electrical
- Electricity and natural gas
- Employment services
- Energy saving upgrades on facilities,
- Engineering

Continued on page 3



COSTARS Has That?

By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager



Exclusive COSTARS Contracts

34

COSTARS-participating Statewide Contracts

200

Awarded COSTARS Suppliers

2177

Available Materials and Services

Immeasurable!

Many COSTARS members may not be aware of the vast amount of materials, services and suppliers available to them through COSTARS-exclusive and COSTARS-participating statewide contracts. Although in FY2014, the COSTARS-3 IT Hardware and COSTARS-15 Water & Wastewater Treatment Consumables contracts were two contracts heavily used by COSTARS members, there are many more contracts to choose from! (See inset for a list of COSTARS-exclusive contracts).

Did you know you can buy frozen food products for your cafeteria (COSTARS-7 Foods); pens, pencils and paperclips for your office (COSTARS-4 Office, School and Library Supplies); books for your school library (COSTARS-4); non-prescription over-the-counter items, skin care, oral hygiene products and gloves for your hospital or nursing home (COSTARS-11 Toiletries)?

If you're in the market for energy conservation management software for your building, COSTARS-28 has it!

Does your fire company need firefighting and rescue equipment, breathing systems and communications equipment? Check out COSTARS-12 Emergency Responder Loose Supplies for all of these items and much more!

Looking for new uniforms for your municipality's public works department? Well, you're in luck! Public works uniforms, personal protection gear, footwear and rainwear are available under COSTARS-37 Uniforms.

You may be surprised by the bevy of products available to you through COSTARS-exclusive contracts, but wait, there's more! Don't forget to check out COSTARS-participating statewide contracts for items like tires, carpet, universal fleet fuel cards and heavy duty power equipment! Need services that might not be available through COSTARS-exclusive contracts? You can find many of them under statewide COSTARS-participating contracts including: small package delivery; advertising and marketing; energy consulting; accounting services; auditing services; equipment maintenance; and professional training services to name a few.

To learn more, please visit the COSTARS website at www.costars.state.pa.us. Go to the Local Government & Schools tab at the top of the page, then hover over COSTARS (Cooperative Purchasing) and then select the Member Information link. Select the yellow Members button in the light-blue box and then select the Search Contracts link to search to COSTARS, statewide or statewide ITQ contracts.

If you have questions about searching contracts, you may contact the COSTARS Team at 1-866-768-7827 for assistance.

COSTARS-exclusive Contracts

- 1 – Copiers, Document Imaging & Multifunction Devices
- 3 – IT Hardware
- 4 – Office, School and Library Supplies
- 5 – Janitorial Supplies
- 6 – Packaged Software
- 7 – Foods
- 8 – Maintenance, Repair & Operation Equipment & Supplies (MRO)
- 9 – Graphic & Printing Services, Equipment & Supplies
- 10 – Voting Systems
- 11 – Toiletries
- 12 – Emergency Responder Loose Supplies
- 13 – Emergency Responder Vehicles
- 14 – Recreational & Fitness Equipment
- 15 – Water & Wastewater Treatment Consumables
- 16 – Water & Wastewater Treatment Plants – Components/Equipment
- 17 – Waste, Recycling & Materials Handling Containers
- 19 – Medical Supplies
- 20 – Laboratory Supplies
- 21 – Pest Control Services
- 22 – Weatherization Materials
- 24 – Traffic Signs
- 25 – Municipal Work Vehicles
- 26 – Passenger Vehicles
- 28 – Energy Conservation Management Supplies
- 29 – Grounds Keeping Services and Supplies
- 30 – Energy Consulting Services
- 32 – Signage
- 33 – Street Lighting, Parking Meters and Street Furniture (AKA Streetscape)
- 34 – Theater (Auditorium) Furniture, Fixtures, Audio/Visual Equipment and Musical Instruments
- 35 – Furniture and Window Treatments
- 36 – Appliances, Cafeteria Equipment and Supplies
- 37 – Uniforms
- 38 – Heavy Equipment Rental



COSTARS Member Survey Results Are In, cont.

New Contract Suggestions, cont.

- Event planning
- Exhaust removal- protective equipment cleaning
- Financial management
- Financing contracts for fire apparatus, vehicle purchases, and equipment
- Fire/rescue equipment, e.g., extrication equipment, specialty rescue equipment
- Fireworks
- Food Service
- Fundraising
- General Construction & HVAC Services
- General engineering and community development consultation
- Geotechnical and soil engineering
- GIS software, training and equipment from ESRI
- GPS
- Health insurance for part time municipal employees
- Human resources
- HVAC
- Internet services

- Janitorial services
- Large Airport Snow Removal Equipment
- Line painting for highways and intersections
- Medical waste/Sharps removal
- Mobile devices, e.g., cell phones, iPads
- Mobile WIFI
- Modified road material
- Municipal and Infectious waste disposal
- Online conferencing
- Painting services
- Pole buildings
- Pool rehabilitation
- Postage meters
- Procurement
- Pump purchasing
- Records Management/Retention
- Recruiting
- Recycling - plastic, newspaper, etc.
- Repairs, and PM's; HVAC, plumbing, paving, snow removal, etc.
- Retention of volunteers
- RFP's for bids
- RX removal services

- School buses
- Security
- Sewage, sewer and stormwater line televising, water leak detection services
- Sewer flow monitoring/flow evaluation
- Sewer rehabilitation, paving
- Soil remediation from hazardous material
- Storm water management emergency preparedness
- Structural
- Substitute custodial workers for school districts
- Technical information resource systems/ computer servers, software, etc. and the installation and training of these systems
- Trades & maintenance services
- Traffic engineering supplies such as conduit and lighting
- Traffic signal maintenance
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Water related "expert" technical guidance
- Web design, website development
- Zoning/Saldo Revisions

Action: The COSTARS team is currently looking into the possibility of developing new consulting services-type contracts, a credit/Pcard contract that will offer rebates to participating members, and an electricity service contract. The team will continue to research the feasibility of creating other new contracts that would benefit a large section of our membership based on these suggestions. Furthermore, many COSTARS contracts already offer the materials and services members mentioned above. For a more in-depth look at the broad scope of COSTARS-exclusive and statewide COSTAR-participating contracts, please refer to the **Guide to COSTARS Contracts** link on the Member Information page of the COSTARS website.

COSTARS Program Assessment

- **93%** of respondents have used the COSTARS Program for their purchasing needs over the past two years. Members who answered the survey told us that the most important factors when deciding to use the program were, in order of importance: lowering purchasing costs; saving administrative costs and staff time; good contract terms and conditions; vendor choices; and program staff support and assistance.
- **98%** of respondents say that the COSTARS Program is excellent and useful.
- The remaining **2%** believe the COSTARS Program needs substantial improvement. Some specific improvements suggested by respondents include:
 - An improved website with easier product and supplier search capabilities.
 - Enhanced website user training, program training and supplier training.
 - More contracts.

Action: In 2014, online training simulations were created to assist members and suppliers with COSTARS website processes. They can be found at the Resource/Training Center link on the Members Area page and at the COSTARS Training Center link of the Supplier Information page. Additionally, in 2015, we developed COSTARS Member and Supplier Training Presentations that cover the background of the COSTARS Program; using the website to search and view contracts; submitting user and member registrations; and bidding on COSTARS contracts, to name a few. Many contract scopes were expanded based on member suggestions; prompting the addition of more key search terms to the Keyword search function on the Contract Search page of the COSTARS website. Finally, a new contract, COSTARS-38 Heavy Equipment Rental was created in response to the 2014 COSTARS Member Survey in which respondents stated that they needed a heavy equipment rental contract.

- **75%** of respondents have no preference between using COSTARS-exclusive and COSTARS-participating statewide contracts when the commodity/service they desire is available in both. Some prefer to use COSTARS-exclusive contracts because the program is easy to use, saves time and money, offers more product and supplier choice and allows for negotiation to get the best price. In addition, they feel that the suppliers are very informative and helpful. Others prefer to use statewide COSTARS-participating contracts due to easier website search capabilities, better and/or fixed pricing, and convenience.

Continued on page 4



COSTARS Member Survey Results Are In, cont.

COSTARS-Authorized Supplier Assessment

- 95% of respondents said they were very satisfied or usually satisfied with vendors they've purchased from through the program.
- The remaining 5% said they had some problems or have not used the program.

Action: Post-purchase surveys may be developed and distributed to assess supplier satisfaction and to determine specific causes for dissatisfaction. Communications will be sent to suppliers to address any concerns members may have.

Some Positive Feedback About COSTARS Suppliers!

- The variety of choices. Our plowing equipment and trucks always come from COSTARS saving us thousands of administrative costs alone. We were able to purchase a brine maker for treating road services in winter time rather quickly through Mid-Atlantic Supplies (dba- Lancaster Truck Bodies).
 - We get salt every year through COSTARS and the provider is always courteous and helpful in making deliveries around our supervisor's schedules.
 - We saved about 50% on office supplies.
 - We have had a great experience with Mahla as an office furniture supplier. The COSTARS contract allowed us to move forward very quickly under a very tight office move deadline. COSTARS saved us a LOT of money and likely delays.
 - Vendor: Warnock Chevrolet - the entire contact with their rep was nothing less than excellent.
 - F&S Supply - Awesome for me, a first time user of the COSTARS Program.
 - Any time you do not have to get three quotes or take bids is an absolute dream.
- ~Look for more great feedback in the next edition of COSTARS Connection.*

COSTARS Staff Assessment

- 57% of respondents said they were satisfied with the assistance/service they received from the program staff.
 - 38% have not needed assistance.
 - The remaining 5% said they had a few problems.
- Action:** Post-assistance surveys may be developed to help determine specific causes for dissatisfaction.

Some Positive Feedback About COSTARS Program and Staff!

- Two years ago we inquired about purchasing a lightly used large power generator with a somewhat short time frame. Your staff helped us learn what was needed to qualify and walked us through the process very clearly and we were able to complete the project saving us time and money.
 - When I call to get information on Salt contract, they are very friendly and helpful, never trying to get me off the phone in a hurry before making sure all my questions are answered.
 - Whenever there are any questions, we have had immediate and courteous responses.
 - Purchasing road material and supplies always runs very smooth.
 - Great program, saves money.
 - If I can't find a particular product or contract, I contact the staff and they are able to help me find what I am looking for.
 - I had trouble with membership info and site navigation and was courteously helped.
- ~Look for more great feedback in the next edition of COSTARS Connection.*

COSTARS Training

- 53% of respondents said they would be interested in attending a COSTARS training program.
- Action:** A Calendar of Events section is available on the Program Resources page of the COSTARS website that provides upcoming COSTARS training or speaking events. If any member would like to sponsor a training event for multiple members, please contact a COSTARS Marketing Manager at 1-866-768-7827. Additionally, the team is considering the possibility of hosting training webinars.



PSATS and COSTARS Working Together

By Claire Osborne,
COSTARS Marketing Manager

This past winter, COSTARS was one of the presenters at the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) Boot Camp for Newly Elected Township Supervisors. This intensive two-day training program, which PSATS conducts every two years, prepares newly elected township officials to handle the duties of their new role as township supervisors.

COSTARS Marketing Managers Bruce Beardsley, Kim Bullivant and Claire Osborne traveled the commonwealth to 13 locations to present guidance on using the COSTARS program to 201 newly elected township supervisors. The presentation covered Pennsylvania Procurement law, history of the program, how to use the COSTARS system, and news and updates regarding the program, including the addition of Assembly/Installation/Construction Services as an ancillary service on all applicable COSTARS-exclusive contracts. Additionally, COSTARS staff provided a brief overview of the alternate purchasing options through the Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations, which also assists local governments with their procurement needs.

COSTARS has been a key participant in the last five Boot Camps sponsored by PSATS. "It is just one indication of the close partnership that we have developed over the past ten years," Beardsley said. PSATS Executive Director Dave Sanko agrees and adds:

Serving the needs of local governments is a primary focus of both COSTARS and PSATS and our two organizations have worked cooperatively on many projects over the years, including the training for our new officials. I meet annually with Bruce Beardsley and we discuss areas of mutual opportunities and concerns. COSTARS is a fantastic program and by working together as closely as we do, we help save money for our communities and their taxpayers!

PSATS is the largest organization of Pennsylvania municipalities, representing communities that cover 95% of the landmass of the commonwealth.

COSTARS will share a booth with the Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations at the PSATS Annual Conference April 17-19. Beardsley will be facilitating a COSTARS workshop for existing township officials on Monday, April 18 at 2:45 p.m. Bullivant and Osborne, along with a representative of the Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations, will be available at the conference's Cyber Café on Monday and Tuesday afternoon to provide hands-on assistance with navigating the respective websites. Please see PSATS Annual Conference Schedule on their website for times and location.

The COSTARS team is available to work with member and supplier organizations to provide education about the COSTARS Program. To request a COSTARS representative to speak or conduct a training session at an upcoming event you are sponsoring, please contact COSTARS at 1-866-768-7827 or email GS-PACostars@pa.gov.

Salt Update A Warm Winter

By Claire Osborne, COSTARS Marketing Manager

This overall warmer winter may have left many COSTARS members in many areas of the state with an unexpected salt surplus. According to the contract requirements, COSTARS members should expect their supplier to require the purchase of at least 60 percent of the member's stated needs prior to the end of the contract period (July 31, 2016), to avoid potential storage charges. If you have questions regarding tons delivered or to place an order, please contact the awarded supplier for your county.

This mild winter and full stockpile bins have caused many members to reduce or even eliminate their tonnage requirements for the 2016-2017 contract period. Currently, 1,625 COSTARS members are registered for the 2016-17 Road salt program, which is a reduction from the record 1,677 during the 2015-16 season. Requested tonnage decreased to 845,412 tons from the record amount of 915,651 tons set in 2015-16.

The awarded contract will be available for review by COSTARS members in August, 2016 on the COSTARS website at <http://www.costars.state.pa.us/>.

The 2015-2016 winter was one for the record books. Nationally, this winter was the warmest in history. The majority of the country experienced above average temperatures, with record warmth in many areas of the northeast.

Ironically, this winter also set some records for a single snowfall. (see box below)

According to weather.com, Winter Storm Jonas was reported as the single largest snowstorm in history for at least six locations:

- * Allentown, Pennsylvania: 31.9 inches
- * Baltimore-Washington International Airport: 29.2 inches
- * Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: 30.2 inches
- * New York – LaGuardia Airport: 27.9 inches
- * New York –JFK Airport: 30.5 inches
- * Newark, New Jersey: 27.9 inches

Do You Buy Green?

By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager



EcoLogo



Energy Star

EPEAT EPEAT™



Green Seal



Recycled Content

It's hard to believe that only within the last 10 years has the term "Buying Green" become a household word, but in that time, it has evolved into a way of life at home and in the workplace. As a matter of fact, the commonwealth's Department of General Services (DGS) has its own Green Procurement policy.

According to Pennsylvania's Procurement Handbook, it is the intent of DGS to integrate environmental considerations into every aspect of procurement through Green Procurement or Environmentally Preferable Procurement.

Pennsylvania's Chief Procurement Officer Jenny Doherty recently spoke about the importance of the Green Procurement initiative. "At DGS, our mission is to help government operate more efficiently, effectively, and safely – delivering exceptional value for all Pennsylvanians; and one way that DGS strives to meet this mission is through Environmentally Preferable Procurement or Green Procurement," said Doherty. "As a large consumer in the marketplace, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recognizes the positive impact we can make on the environment and human health through our procurement decisions. In addition, the commonwealth has an intensive Recycling Program as well as a Surplus Program that coordinates sharing and re-purposing assets across agencies."

Green Procurement is a means to help sustain healthy communities by minimizing waste; conserving energy or water; reducing the amount of toxics disposed or consumed; maximizing post-consumer and overall recycled content; and minimizing greenhouse gases. Additionally, it provides sustainable solutions which can be less expensive, providing long-term cost benefits without sacrificing functionality or quality.

Does your organization have its own Green Procurement policy?

When the Green Procurement effort began about a decade ago, many successful government green purchasing projects were done through cooperative purchasing, as reported in a recent article from AmericanCityandCounty.com/GovernmentProductNews titled **Cooperative Purchasing Helps Drive Green Purchasing**.

Early on, greener products were a bit more expensive than traditional products, but when groups of governments began to leverage their purchasing power by indicating what was important to them in terms of performance and environmental requirements, manufacturers were able to take advantage of economies of scale to bring prices down. This allowed governments to buy high-performing greener products at the same or lower cost than traditional products.

As a result, COSTARS members currently have many opportunities to leverage their purchasing power through the COSTARS Program to obtain better pricing on a variety of Green products.

According to Kevin Kuklewski, Sales Manager for Quaker City Paper (a COSTARS supplier), Green cleaning products are commonly requested by COSTARS members. "Especially the schools, because there is a raised awareness of keeping healthier indoor environments for the kids," said Kuklewski. "Green cleaner technologies have improved over the years and have eliminated poor performance factors of the past. Nearly all commercial and institutional users are open to the better cleaning products in the Green classification."

Did you know that many COSTARS-exclusive and COSTARS-participating statewide contracts and suppliers offer Green products? We recommend contacting suppliers directly or visiting their website to find out if they offer Green products that fall within the scope of their contract.

To learn more about the commonwealth's Green Procurement initiative, please visit the [Green Procurement](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/Businesses/Materials%20and%20Services%20Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/Green-Procurement.aspx) page of the DGS website at: <http://www.dgs.pa.gov/Businesses/Materials%20and%20Services%20Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/Green-Procurement.aspx>

Speaking of Green initiatives, don't forget to take part in National Earth Day on April 22!



COSTARS On The Road

COSTARS Marketing Managers make it their mission to spread the message about the COSTARS Program as well as to recruit and train members and suppliers about COSTARS. Marketing Managers Bruce Beardsley, Kim Bullivant and Claire Osborne travel throughout the commonwealth speaking at conferences, workshops and seminars sponsored by associations, suppliers, universities, legislators, chambers of commerce and others.

Recent Events Attended By COSTARS Staff

March 29	PennDOT District 3 Municipal Members' Training Troy
March 30	SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) Suppliers' Workshop Lewisburg
March 31	SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG)/PTAC Suppliers' Workshop Harrisburg
April 6	Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 (IU13) Facility Managers Meeting Lancaster

Upcoming Events

April 12	SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG)/PTAC Suppliers' Workshop Bellefonte
April 12	United Rentals-COSTARS Workshop Washington, PA
April 13	PA Municipal Authorities Management Workshop Hershey
April 17-19	PA State Assn. of Township Supervisors (PSATS) Annual Conference Hershey
April 20	PA Municipal Authorities Management Workshop Farmington
April 21	Mountain Council of Governments (MCOG) Spring Meeting Drums
April 25	Lycoming County Commissioners Member Workshop Williamsport
April 26-27	Schaedler Yesco Expo 2016 Hershey
April 28	Crawford County COG Members' Workshop Meadville
May 18	17th Annual West Branch COG Equipment Show and Training Day Lycoming

If you would like to attend one of the above-mentioned events, please contact the sponsoring organization. To submit a request for a COSTARS representative to speak or conduct a training session for members or suppliers at an upcoming event, please contact Bruce Beardsley at 717-214-3432 or bbeardsley@pa.gov; Kim Bullivant at 717-346-2678 or kbullivant@pa.gov; or Claire Osborne at 717-346-3838 or cosborne@pa.gov. The COSTARS Marketing Team's Calendar of Events is also available on the COSTARS website on the [COSTARS Program Resources](#) page.



Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to begin receiving COSTARS updates! Remember, this does not replace important updates we send to you via email, so please be sure to maintain your member and supplier information in the COSTARS system.

Visit our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Costars-PA-Department-of-General-Services/904261462952351?ref=hl>

Visit our Twitter page at:

<https://twitter.com/COSTARSNews>.

At DGS, our mission is to help government operate more efficiently, effectively, and safely - delivering exceptional value for all Pennsylvanians.

COSTARS Connection

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Further information on the COSTARS program is available by phone at 1-866-768-7827 or by visiting the [COSTARS](http://www.costars.state.pa.us) website at www.costars.state.pa.us.

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