

COSTARS Connection

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Image provided courtesy of VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org

COSTARS Membership Reaches 8,000

By Bruce Beardsley,
COSTARS Marketing Manager

On July 17, Westmoreland City Volunteer Fire Department (WCVFD) Chief Michael Doshen registered his organization as a COSTARS member. Little did he know, WCVFD would be the 8,000th COSTARS member and entitled to all the prestige and prizes included in that distinction (there really are none, except this article).

WCVFD is one of seven fire companies that protect the 27 square miles of North Huntingdon Township, a growing community with a population of more than 30,000, which is located in Westmoreland County approximately 23 miles east of Pittsburgh. The fire company started operations in 1925 and was officially incorporated in 1927.

According to Chief Doshen, he had heard from other fire departments and municipalities that significant discounts are extended to COSTARS members by participating suppliers and, while researching for a new fire apparatus to purchase, the manufacturer (KME) promoted COSTARS pricing. WCVFD has already made plans to purchase a Heavy Duty Pickup truck through COSTARS-25 Municipal Work Vehicles Contract and Structural Firefighting Personal Protective Equipment from COSTARS-12 Emergency Responder Loose Supplies Contract.

WCVFD is one of 1,433 fire, rescue, or ambulance services registered as COSTARS members, representing 18 percent of all COSTARS members. Overall, COSTARS membership grew by more than six percent during fiscal year 2013, or more than one new member every business day.

Chief Doshen indicated that registration was extremely easy and only took a few minutes. "Our expectation is that COSTARS membership will be nothing less than a positive experience," said Doshen.



2014-15 Salt Contract Awarded

By Bruce Beardsley, COSTARS Marketing Manager

The Department of General Services (DGS) recently completed the solicitation, receipt, and analysis of the 2014-2015 bids for road salt to meet the needs of COSTARS participants and PennDOT. The contract has been awarded effective Aug. 1, 2014.

A record 1,584 COSTARS members have signed on for the 2014-15 season requiring a record 828,857 tons, representing an increase of 57 members and a 16 percent increase in tonnage over the previous season.

Over the last several years, COSTARS members benefited from largely stable prices for sodium chloride (road salt). However, after one of the longest, snowiest and iciest winters on record across the country, salt stockpiles have been depleted. Low supply equals higher prices and this year's prices will average nine percent more than last year, with significant swings among Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Eight counties will experience increases of less than five percent (with Tioga County experiencing the lowest increase of 2.2 percent), while 15 counties will see their prices increase by more than 12 percent (with Forest County suffering a 37 percent increase). Larger increases were generally absorbed in western counties.

DGS solicited two different prices this year: an "initial fill" price for a minimum of 300 tons ordered by Sept. 30 and delivered during the months of August, September, and October, as well as the standard "winter usage" pricing ordered and delivered from Nov. 1 through July 31. Approximately 365 participating COSTARS members have the storage capacity for 300 or more tons. Members in six counties will receive lower prices if they choose to participate in the initial fill program. In five counties, the initial fill supplier is different from the winter usage supplier. Salt suppliers are not required to fulfill winter usage orders until Nov. 1.

In the 2013-14 contract, six suppliers were awarded contracts. This year, contracts have been awarded to four suppliers. International Salt Company and Morton Salt have merged and North American Salt Company did not receive any awards. American Rock Salt was the low winter usage bidder in 38 counties (compared to 31 in 2013-14), Cargill received the contract in 10 counties (compared to seven), Oceanport was the low bidder in two counties (compared to four), and Morton Salt was awarded contracts in 17 counties.

Similar to last year, pricing is fixed and there are no monthly fuel adjustments. The contract will be posted on or about Aug. 1 to the [COSTARS website](#) and available for your viewing at the **Members** page under **Current News**.

The Dreaded Audit

By Claire Osborne, COSTARS Marketing Manager

At one time or another, all public entities face the probability of an audit. The best way to handle an audit is to be proactive, with standard documentation prepared before the auditor arrives. Historically, as it relates to COSTARS, auditors look for the following:

- Was the supplier participating on a COSTARS contract at the time of your purchase?
- Did the supplier agree to service your county under the COSTARS Contract?
- Was the commodity you purchased listed on the supplier's COSTARS Contract?
- Did the price you paid correspond with the supplier's COSTARS Contract (at or less than the contract price)?

To satisfy these questions, we recommend taking the following steps when you purchase any commodity or service using COSTARS. Keep exceptionally detailed records, and make sure you verify all of these requirements prior to your purchase:

- Verify the supplier is a COSTARS Contract holder and the commodity or service you are purchasing from them is included in their COSTARS Contract.
- Open the Contract Overview and print the supplier listing for proof the Supplier was holding a COSTARS Contract at the time of purchase.
- Print each page of the Vendor Contract.
 - * For COSTARS Exclusive Contracts this will include the Service Area, the Product Category, Manufacturer List, Ancillary Services, Bid Item Sheet, Custom Pricing Lists and List of Authorized Dealers.
 - * If purchasing from a Statewide Contract participating in COSTARS, print the pages that include the pricing for the commodity or service you are purchasing.
- Attach these printed documents to your purchase order and keep with your files.

This record-keeping strategy will reduce the time it will take you to prepare for the auditor. Keep your files orderly and systemized, so you can promptly produce anything the auditor may request.

Spotlight on COSTARS-11 Toiletries Contract: Save Money

By Claire Osborne, COSTARS Marketing Manager

A COSTARS-exclusive contract that is not utilized to its fullest potential is COSTARS -11 Toiletries. In Fiscal Year 2012, COSTARS Members spent \$185,000 using COSTARS-11.

"There are so many things that are covered under this contract," said COSTARS Commodity Specialist Kathy Lewis. Members can use this contract to purchase condoms, feminine products, hair care products, miscellaneous non-prescription (over-the-counter) items, optical and oral hygiene products, and shaving and skin care products. This broad scope allows members to buy things like dental floss, deodorant, facial tissue, mouthwash, soap, over-the-counter medicine and cotton swabs. This contract can be utilized by COSTARS members such as county prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and many others, according to Lewis.

York County spends tens of thousands of dollars every year for their county prison using COSTARS-11, purchasing No-Shank toothbrushes, toothpaste and shaving cream as well as other products, according to Purchasing Coordinator Tina Blessing. She says using COSTARS saves York County time and money by not having to go out to bid and also allows them to purchase locally.

George Junior Republic, a nonprofit residential treatment community for at risk youth, also uses the COSTARS-11 contract heavily. Our sales reports reflect the non-profit education community uses this contract to purchase hair care, oral hygiene, shaving and skin care products.

We encourage our members to search this contract and see if they can save money utilizing the contract. COSTARS members may already be purchasing items that are included in the scope of the contract, and do not realize they can purchase the items at a significantly discounted rate using COSTARS.



Sales Reporting - Why?

By Claire Osborne, COSTARS Marketing Manager

COSTARS-authorized suppliers are required to report their COSTARS sales to the Department of General Services (DGS), on at least a quarterly basis, according to the terms and conditions of their contract.

This data is compiled and analyzed by the COSTARS staff and reported to the appropriate reviewing organizations. In addition, this sales data is the primary accountability measure of the overall effectiveness of the COSTARS Program and assists DGS in instituting program improvements.

For example, if a particular contract's sales are minimal, or not experiencing growth, COSTARS staff can investigate the reasons and take remedial action, such as offering marketing suggestions or training for suppliers, and/or increasing awareness among members. In extreme situations, a COSTARS contract may be discontinued.

Sales data can point to regions of the state, or categories of membership, or even specific local public procurement units that may not be fully utilizing certain contracts, or the program in general, triggering special marketing or training initiatives. The sales data can be used to highlight opportunities for suppliers to increase sales efforts in an underserved geographic or user market. By tracking the size of average COSTARS transactions, we are able to approximate savings to members and provide input to the legislature in their oversight responsibility of the commonwealth's Public Bidding laws.

For training on how to report sales and other COSTARS Supplier tasks, visit the [Resources/Calendar of Events/Training Center](#) on the COSTARS website.

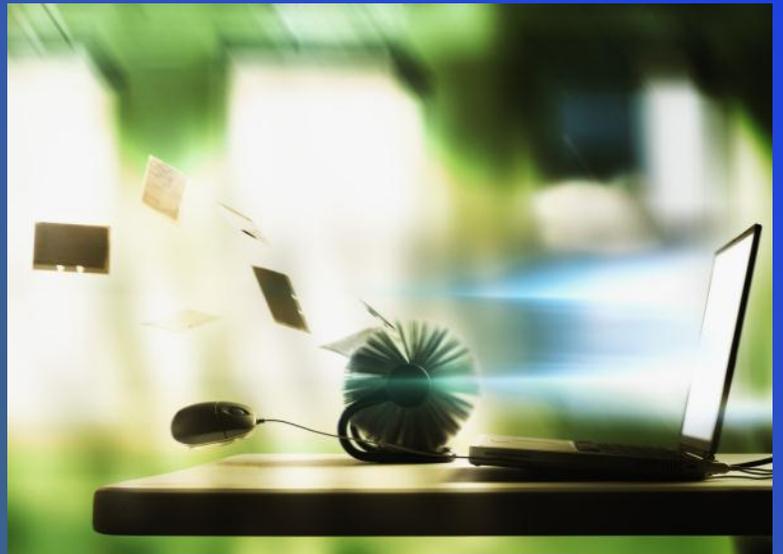
IMPORTANT NOTE:
When reporting **Number of Transactions**, do not report the number of units sold, only the total number of transactions (i.e. purchase orders submitted) for that particular member for a specific reporting period.

Have You Tried COSTARS Online Training Yet? Take Our Survey!

In March, the COSTARS team introduced new online training aids to assist members and suppliers with website processes such as user registration, contract search and bidding on COSTARS contracts.

Have you used the new training aids? If so, we'd like to know what you think. To provide feedback about your online training experience, please take our [COSTARS Online Training Survey](#). Your responses are important to us and will help us improve the COSTARS online training experience.

If you haven't used COSTARS online training aids and need help with an online process, be sure to check them out on the COSTARS website under the [Resources/Calendar of Events/Training Center](#) link.



What's New on the COSTARS Website?

Keyword Feature

Your search has just been made easier with the addition of the new Keyword feature to the [COSTARS Contract Search](#) page. Simply search for a product by using the **Keyword** drop-down box or type the first few letters of the item you are searching for to reveal a list of items available on COSTARS-exclusive contracts.

Calendar of Events

Check out the COSTARS Marketing Team's new **Calendar of Events** link on the COSTARS website [Resources/Calendar of Events/Training Center](#) page to find out when the team will be presenting the COSTARS Program at an event near you!

Where Do I Find....

Motors and Power Transmission

- COSTARS - 8 Maintenance, Repair and Operation (MRO) Equipment and Supplies
- State Contract 4400007622 MRO

Water Sports Equipment

- COSTARS - 14 Recreational and Fitness Equipment

Termite Control

- COSTARS - 21 Pest Control Services
- State Contract 4400011641 Integrated Pest Management

Vacuum Trucks, Street Sweepers

- COSTARS - 25 Municipal Work Vehicles

Firewall and Security Software

- COSTARS - 6 Software
- State Contract 6100024938 Networking Equipment and Related Services

Pallet Jacks, Forklifts, Winches

- COSTARS - 8 Maintenance, Repair and Operation (MRO) Equipment and Supplies
- Material Handling State Contract MRO 4400007622

Aggregates - Anti-skid Material, Sand, Rocklining

- State Contract 5610-15 - Aggregates and Anti-Skid Materials

Road Oil

- State Contract 5710-01 - Bituminous Liquid Materials

Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations Offers Money Saving Programs

By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Did you know that in addition to the extensive selection of products available through the COSTARS program, most COSTARS member organizations can also take advantage of the Federal and/or State Surplus Property Programs offered by the Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations (BSSO)?

Federal and/or state surplus property includes items such as medical equipment, vehicles, office supplies, furniture, kitchen equipment and much more. When an agency declares an item excess to its needs, it's first offered to other government agencies. If no interest is expressed among these agencies, the property becomes surplus and is made available to eligible nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations at a nominal charge to cover the costs of administering the program.

Some examples of eligible organizations include:

- Colleges and Universities
- Councils of Governments
- Fire and Rescue Departments
- Hospitals
- Municipalities
- Museums
- Public Libraries
- Schools
- Shelters and Food Banks

Through this program, the Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations is able to place millions of dollars' worth of property back into public use in Pennsylvania, saving taxpayers \$2 - \$3 million annually.

In addition to the Federal and State Surplus Property Programs, BSSO offers Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Surplus property, Fixed Price Sales Vehicles Program, Law Enforcement 1033 Excess Property Program and the Law Enforcement 1122 New Property Program. To learn more about these programs or to find out if your organization qualifies, visit the [Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations](#) website.



UNIQUESource Different Name, Same Mission

By Bruce Beardsley, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Since 1956, the Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind and Handicapped, better known as PIBH, has partnered with its member organizations, such as Goodwill Industries, Pennsylvania Counties Associations for the Blind, Easter Seal Society of Pennsylvania and Associations for Retarded Citizens (ARC); to identify, market and deliver products and services that create employment opportunities for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. On Jan. 1, 2014, PIBH became UniqueSource Products & Services to better identify it as an independent business enterprise and to assist it in expanding its market opportunities, according to UniqueSource President Vince Loose.

UniqueSource holds the state contracts to provide various products and services to state agencies under the commonwealth's statutory requirement that state government must purchase certain available products and services manufactured or performed by persons with disabilities. These contracts (4400004306 for products and 4400004695 for services) are COSTARS-participating and remain effective through 2024.

UniqueSource offers a variety of products and services; including call centers, carpet installation, janitorial and grounds maintenance, clothing, office supplies, cleaning agents, and a full line of safety items custom designed for municipalities.



PA Correctional Industries Saving Money while Retraining Inmates

By Bruce Beardsley, COSTARS Marketing Manager

PA Correctional Industries (PCI) provides a synergistic opportunity for COSTARS members to generate procurement savings while investing in the retraining of inmates to learn work habits and skills that will make them desirable employees and productive citizens upon release.

PCI is a bureau of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) that manufactures high quality products and sells them at competitive prices to state and local government agencies and other tax-supported and non-profit institutions through the COSTARS program. PCI operates as an independent business, generating its own working capital and receives no monies from the general fund. They produce and sell more than 16,000 different items including bags, apparel, recreation equipment, toiletries, furniture, printing, signage, housekeeping products and much more.

A Letter of Agreement has been established between the Department of General Services (DGS) and DOC allowing commonwealth agencies and eligible COSTARS Members to purchase PCI products and services without the need for a formal bidding process. The Letter of Agreement reference number is PCI-LOA-2014 and can be viewed on eMarketplace (search contracts). It replaces contract numbers 4400004305 and 4400004576, which have been terminated.

PCI's catalog is available online at www.pci.state.pa.us. There is no minimum order unless otherwise specified by PCI. PCI may include shipping/handling charges in their quote for specialty materials. To obtain quotes and subsequently purchase, COSTARS Members should contact PCI Customer Service at 717-425-7292, or email pci@pa.gov.

PCI Customer Service will create a sales document and process billing which will generate an invoice upon shipment/delivery.

COSTARS On The Road

The COSTARS Marketing Team makes 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. In June, the marketing team hosted prospective suppliers workshops in Harrisburg providing potential new COSTARS suppliers with information regarding the program and the requirements to become an authorized supplier.



Recent Events Attended By COSTARS Staff

- May 6** Members' Workshop sponsored by Xpedx Wilkes Barre
- May 7** Grant Workshop sponsored by Senator Folmer Lewisberry
- May 8** Members' Workshop sponsored by Senator Alloway Ortana
- May 9** SE PA PTAC/SEDA-COG Workshop for Prospective Suppliers – Harrisburg
- May 14** Members' Workshop sponsored by Xpedx State College
- May 22** Doing Business with PHA sponsored by Philadelphia Housing Authority – Philadelphia
- May 28** Moshannon Valley Council of Government (COG) Equipment Show and Training Day – Clearfield County
- May 30** PTAC Government Procurement Expo in Johnstown
- June 5** Opening Doors Reverse Trade Show Sponsored by Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce – Reading
- June 12-14** PA State Association of Township Commissioners Annual Conference – Lancaster
- June 27** PTAC – Chester County Economic Development Center – Exton
- July 17-20** 43rd Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania State Mayors' Association - Grantville
- July 24** Adams County Council of Government (COG) Meeting – Gettysburg
- July 30** Members' Workshop sponsored by Xpedx - Boalsburg

Upcoming Events

- Aug. 13** Luzerne County Association of Township Officials Wyoming
- Aug. 13 - 15** PA Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Lancaster
- Aug. 25 - 26** PA Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA) Annual Conference Hershey
- Sept. 12 - 13** PA Councils of Government (PACOG) Annual Conference State College
- Sept. 17 - 19** PA Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Altoona
- Sept. 18** Clarion County Association of Township Officials Convention Knox
- Sept. 30** SEDA Council of Governments (SEDACOG) Prospective Supplier Workshop Lancaster
- Oct. 7** SEDA Council of Governments (SEDACOG) Prospective Supplier Workshop State College
- Oct. 8** Linkup Technology Conference Altoona
- Oct. 17 - 19** Pocono EMS Conference Pocono Manor
- Oct. 22** GACO Annual Procurement Fair Washington
- Oct. 22** Lehigh Valley Meet the Buyers Expo Bethlehem

COSTARS Connection



Michael Richart – Deputy Secretary for Procurement
 Dawn Eshenour – Acting Director, Programs & Systems/COSTARS Program Manager
 Bruce Beardsley – Marketing Manager
 Kim Bullivant – Marketing Manager
 Claire Osborne – Marketing Manager

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Further information on the COSTARS program is available by phone at 866-768-7827 or by visiting the [COSTARS](#) website.

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 under the [Resources/Calendar of Events /Training Center](#) link.

New Members



- Allegheny Township - Cambria County
- Bangor Police Department
- Be Proud Foundation
- Beaver Falls Municipal Authority
- Bendersville Borough
- Bethany Home, Inc.
- Buffalo Valley Regional Police Department
- C.A.R.E.S. Community and Residential Empowerment Services
- Career Technology Center of Lackawanna County
- Centre County Airport Authority
- Colebrookdale Township Constable
- Coulter Volunteer Fire Company
- Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School
- Duquesne City School District
- Foulkeways Foundation & Communications
- Franklinton Borough
- Friends of Western PA CARES for Kids
- Hilltown Volunteer Fire Company
- Hollidaysburg Area School District Foundation
- Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau
- I-LEAD Charter School
- Institute for Leadership, Education, Advancement & Development, Inc.
- Lancaster County Workforce Investment Board
- Lancaster General Medical Group
- Lehigh Valley Health Network
- Ligonier Township Municipal Authority
- Linfield Fire Company No. 1
- Lower Turkeyfoot Township
- Lower Valley Ambulance Service
- Midway Volunteer Fire Department of Washington County
- New Stanton Volunteer Fire Department
- Northern Cambria Municipal Authority
- Northern Regional Police Department
- OPAT One Project at a Time
- PA Constable Stroudsburg Ward 3
- Pathway to Recovery
- Pennsylvania State Constable
- Porter Township Municipal Water Authority
- Private Industry Council of Centre County
- Programs Employing People
- QUEST, Inc.
- Sarah A. Reed Retirement Center
- Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department
- Shavers Creek Volunteer Fire Company
- Slocum Township
- Stockdale Borough
- Tamaqua Constable
- The Pike County Developmental Center
- The Salvation Army
- Threshold, Inc.
- Treasure Lake Fire Company
- West Penn Township Constable
- West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation
- Westmoreland Homestead Volunteer Fire Department
- Westmoreland City Volunteer Fire Department & Relief Association
- White Haven Area Community Library, Inc.
- Workforce Wayne, Inc.
- YMCA of Greater Scranton

New Suppliers

COSTARS SUPPLIERS - COSTARS EXCLUSIVE CONTRACTS

- COSTARS – 1 Toshiba America Business Solutions, Inc.
Canon, USA, Inc.
- COSTARS – 3 Dagostino Electronic Services
Design Data Corporation
Microapex Computer Systems, Inc.
Northshore Technological, Inc.
OA Systems, LLC
Total Video Products, Inc.
Two Technologies, Inc.
- COSTARS – 4 Way Office Plus
Weaver Associates, Inc.
- COSTARS – 5 Amano Pioneer Eclipse
Apex Cleaning Supply Inc.
Sanford Company
Standardized Sanitation Systems dba Triple S
- COSTARS – 6 Software Systems, Inc.
- COSTARS – 8 3 B Services, Inc.
Central PA Dock & Door, LLC
Cope Floor & Wall Covering
Crystalline Technology, LLC
E.A. Waetjen, Inc.
Interline Brands, Inc. dba Wilmar Industries
Larry Rarig dba LR Machinery Sales LLC
- COSTARS – 12 10-8 Emergency Vehicle Service, LLC
Everest Tactical Solutions, Inc.
Island Tech Services, LLC
- COSTARS – 13 Blaise Alexander Ford of Ephrata
John Meegan Ford, Inc.
Mar-Eco dba Keystone Ford
MJR Equipment
- COSTARS – 14 Kompan, Inc.
Robinson Steel Company
- COSTARS – 15 Aqua Chemical Supply, Inc.
Smith Water Technologies LLC
- COSTARS – 16 HD Supply Waterworks, LTD
MeterPro Services, Inc.
Mid Atlantic Pump & Equipment Company
Progressive Pipeline Management
Vacuum Sales, Inc.

COSTARS SUPPLIERS - COSTARS EXCLUSIVE CONTRACTS, Cont.

- COSTARS – 19 Instrumentation Associates, Inc.
MedCare Equipment Company LLC
- COSTARS – 21 RATT Inc. dba Orkin Pest Control
- COSTARS – 22 Tom Brown, Inc.
- COSTARS – 25 Blaise Alexander Ford of Ephrata
Buchanan Auto Park, Inc.
John Meegan Ford, Inc.
Mid Atlantic Municipal, LLC dba Lancaster Truck Bodies
Vacuum Sales, Inc.
- COSTARS – 26 John Meegan Ford, Inc.
- COSTARS – 29 Total Asphalt Maintenance, Inc.
- COSTARS – 32 KGC Enterprises, Inc.
Leading Edge Signs & Imaging
W. J. Strickler Signs
- COSTARS – 33 Cale America, Inc.
Forms and Surfaces, Inc.
- COSTARS – 35 Tab Products Co., LLC
Teknion, LLC
- COSTARS – 36 Curran Taylor, Inc.

COSTARS PARTICIPATING SUPPLIERS - STATEWIDE CONTRACTS

- 4400006911 Facilities Planners & Architects, Inc.
- 4400009631 Supply Source Inc. Supply Source Office Interiors, Inc.
- 4400009641 Supply Source Inc. Supply Source Office Interiors, Inc.
- 4400010380 BRM Holdings dba Business Records Management
- 4400010521 Morocco Electric, Inc.
- 4400012884 Pierson Computing Connection, Inc.
- 4400013096 McKesson Drug
- 4400013173 Northeastern Uniform
- 4400013218 Taser
- 4400013309 Sunbury Motor Company
- 4400013438 BI Incorporated
- 4400013444 Sentinel Offender Services
- 4400013445 Secure Alert, Inc.
- 4400013524 Ideation, Inc.
- 4600015426 McDonald Sand & Gravel, Inc.

**As of July 22, 2014*

