

## Feds experience masterful efficiencies

In January 2002, the Bank of Montreal (BMO) won the contract to supply 113 Government of Canada departments and agencies with *MasterCard* purchasing acquisition cards. In the federal a-card picture, there are two cards. VISA accounts for some 6,000 cards and an annual total of about \$100 million under a contract with CIBC. *MasterCard* accounts for the majority of activity with about 29,000 cards and \$500 million of purchases each year.



BMO now needed to replace previous cards in jig-time. "This is by far the largest implementation we've ever experienced, over twice the size of any BMO has done before. Thanks to excellent client cooperation and an all out effort, we were able to provide 29,000 cards in less than six weeks," says Randy Ford, managing director of BMO e-Purchasing Solutions. "The special challenge was the scope of the client requirement, the size of the Government of Canada and the different needs and systems in well over a hundred individual departments and agencies."

The federal government is also pleased with the program according to Robert Berniquez, Treasury Board Comptrollership Branch's director of financial management policy.

"The acquisition card is a great procurement tool and the *MasterCard* process has gone very well. In the first three quarters of this contract alone we've seen a two percent increase in volume. That may sound modest, but with over half a billion dollars in purchases, it's very substantial indeed. In fact, the target for 2003 is to reach \$700 million in purchasing volume," says Berniquez

Greater acquisition card use by federal procurement specialists is something the government would like to see. The cards and the back-end reporting, management and analysis systems provided by products like BMO's "*details Online*" produce greater accountability and efficiency at lower costs and facilitate continuous improvement. Berniquez stresses that the a-card makes it much easier for individual procurement specialists as well, saving time and money for everyone. Ford is anticipating that BMO will be putting a new version of its system in place in spring 2003, only a year after implementation.

"We conducted an extensive federal customer survey over the summer and, while we found a very high level of customer satisfaction, we were also able to identify more user-friendly improvements, such as government specific menus, that we can develop to make it even better." —David Newman

## Just the ticket... one contract for helicopters

After many delays and discussions on how to replace the Department of National Defence's ageing Sea King helicopters, in early December the defence minister stated his intention to go with a single contract rather than two contracts, saying it is "more efficient." The two-contract option marries the airframe to the instrument and mission systems and is said to carry a bigger risk, while one contract apparently means a shorter timeframe for delivery of the chosen replacement and less risk.

## Government needs energy too

In Alberta, the cost of power has fluctuated constantly since the province deregulated its electrical power supply in January 2001. In early 2002, the Government of Canada negotiated an agreement ([www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cdm-ji/menu-e.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cdm-ji/menu-e.asp)) with ENMAX Energy Corporation to supply power to the federal government's Alberta facilities at a fixed price. Steps needed to reach an agreement included collecting and analyzing data on power consumption to determine exact power requirements and to identify the peak usage times. The ability to control the power load during peak periods by utilizing existing backup generators at some facilities was key. Under the agreement, which is something of a roadmap for future agreements, ENMAX invoices the facilities and provides technical and engineering support and, as per federal environmental objectives, 35 percent of the electricity provided is "green power." Additionally, PWGSC retains the carbon credits.

## Ontario business links

In mid-October the Ottawa office of the Ontario Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, along with its partners Doyle-tech Corporation, Materials and Manufacturing Ontario, OCRI, the Ottawa Citizen and Sunstrum Hanel, hosted the second Linkages in Manufacturing trade show. Ministry consultants work with industry to support the growth of Ontario businesses. Building on research by Hill and Knowlton, this year's event focused on putting people with ideas together with the people who could execute those ideas – all in Eastern Ontario. Attendees also welcomed the four in-show seminars on the theme "lean manufacturing."

## Guide to sustainable city infrastructure

The *National Guide to Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure: Innovations and Best Practices* is a project funded under the **Infrastructure Canada Program** and implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in partnership with the National Research Council (NRC). The guide will identify and disseminate the best practices that support municipal decisions and actions regarding sustainable infrastructure. Currently, two best practices are published with 30 more on the way. It is the focal point for a collaborative national network of practitioners, researchers and municipal governments.

## ...and not "Just the ticket"

In late November, the Department of National Defence decided after all that Tibbett & Britton were not "just the ticket" (see *Summit*, September 2002) for the military supply chain. The contract was cancelled at a potential cost of over \$5 million, an automatic penalty fee included in the contract. However, the department feels that its own efforts to streamline and modernize the internal supply network will reap more cost savings than those projected under the outsourcing plan.

## US calls for more competition

Office of Management and Budget (OMB, [www.whitehouse.gov/omb](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb)) officials say that all work done by public sector employees that can be considered “commercial” should be open to competition from the private sector – affecting potentially 850,000 federal employees. This change to Budget Circular A-76, which presumes that “all activities are commercial in nature unless an activity is justified as inherently governmental,” (jobs described as “inherently governmental” cannot be outsourced by law), has the potential to increase the amount of federal outsourcing opportunities for the private sector. For example, it would open up the Inter-Service Support Agreements between federal agencies to private sector competition – a multi-billion dollar federal market. The OMB appears to be hoping that competition will drive efficiency. ❧ –*Summary, Government Executive Magazine, December 3, 2002*

## New Brunswick manages corrections system information



In late November, the New Brunswick Department of Public Safety ([www.gnb.ca/0276/index-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/0276/index-e.asp)) received a Canadian Information Productivity Award (CIPA) in the government category, for the province’s offender-related client information system (CIS). The CIS, built by xwave ([www.xwave.com](http://www.xwave.com)), is fully bilingual and supports jail management, community-based corrections and victim services. It also has a case-management system to help reintegrate offenders into society. CIS is connected to several provincial and federal justice-related organizations, allowing users to share information more efficiently. At the federal level it interfaces with the Offender-Management System, enabling the transfer of demographics; physical-appearance information; digital photos; security and medical alerts among others. CIS is accessible to the Canadian Firearms Registry and plans to connect with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (part of Statistics Canada) and, possibly, with the National Parole Board and other law enforcement systems. ❧

## Partners in processing health claims

Public Works and Government Services Canada, Atlantic Region (PWGSC), collaborating with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), recently awarded Atlantic Blue Cross Care ([www.atl.bluecross.ca](http://www.atl.bluecross.ca)) of Moncton the contract (\$100 million over six and a half years) to provide the IT services needed to deliver the Federal Health Claims Processing System. Under the contract, VAC will administer the contract and PWGSC will handle mediation, invoice processing and contract negotiations. The partnership between the government departments and Blue Cross means that when any of the 250,000 veterans uses a VAC health claims card, the claim and accounting information will be handled electronically – no additional paperwork or personal cost. ❧

## Dressing for success

The work of the RCMP and the Department of National Defence (DND) demands a variety of specialized clothing from dress uniforms to protective gear. A Montreal company, Pantalons Garantit et Fairmount Inc., has been contracted to provide nearly 14,000 pairs of the recognizable pants (blue with yellow stripes) for the men and women of the RCMP by February 2003. Special sizes will be provided on an as-requested basis until the following October. As well, Pacific Safety Products Ltd (based in Kelowna, BC) will provide over 1,000 sets of soft-body-armour vests and over 2,500 internal vest carriers (which allow the vest to be worn under the police officers’ uniforms) to arrive by late February. The work on the contract will be done in Arnprior, Ontario.

Peerless Garments Ltd ([www.peerless.mb.ca](http://www.peerless.mb.ca)) of Winnipeg, was awarded three contracts (combined value \$2.1 million) to provide DND with camouflage trousers and coats; cold/wet-weather parkas and trousers; and extreme cold/wet weather parkas and trousers. ❧



## Riding the technology waves

In its recent report, *Technology in Government: Riding the Waves of Change*, Accenture ([www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)) looked at the role new technology will play in government responses to current and increasing pressures such as fiscal and demographic constraints; increasing globalization causing increased expectations of service and an increasing need to balance local and international obligations; disengagement of citizens; a shortage of skills as retirement increases; and unpredictable events that divert resources. They reviewed, then grouped 150 technologies into waves of technology change: digital content services, privacy and rights management, enterprise interoperability, reach and mobility, silent commerce, information insight and simulation. As well, government executives from 10 nations, including Canada, prioritized areas for improvement such as focusing more on constituents, loosening jurisdictional boundaries to enable more sharing of information and establishing funding and incentives to achieve the goals. The report proposes changes that, enabled by technology, could have a practical impact on policy development. ❧

## Ontario building secure health email network

In late November, EDS Canada was awarded a contract worth \$70 million by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to build a secure email network so that doctors, laboratories, pharmacists, hospitals and health care providers can share confidential medical and patient data such as lab results, diagnostic reports and, potentially, digitized X-rays and MRI scans. ❧

### Advisory panel reports on Government On-Line

The report of the Government On-Line (GOL) Advisory Panel, presented to Treasury Board president Lucienne Robillard, on December 11, calls on the federal government to make electronic service delivery a priority across the entire government and beyond, with enhanced leadership, greater resources and better communications among its seven recommendations.



First and foremost among its recommendations, however, was “immediate action to re-think its current operations,” with a view to creating a service delivery network that meets users’ needs in ways the users themselves define.

Panel co-chair Barbara Stymiest, CEO of the TSX Group said “We think that is a very critical recommendation.” Government On-Line is about rebuilding how government works, internally and externally, she added. “We think it is much broader than technology.”

The report calls on the government to create stronger leadership for GOL, by making the deputy prime minister and the Treasury Board president co-chairs of “a reference group of ministers of service transformation.” Reporting to them, a new deputy minister position, chief information and service officer, would drive the transformation agenda.

The Advisory Panel’s co-chair is Guy Savard, Merrill Lynch Canada’s vice-chairman of the board and chairman of the board for Quebec operations. Taking a narrow, technological view of Government On-Line, he said, it would be “missing the whole point.” He believes the right leadership team could and should have “authority over the whole process.”

Asked to point to private sector successes that the GOL initiative might emulate, Stymiest pointed to the banking sector, with its world-

wide integrated, automated network. As Savard pointed out, the 25-member advisory panel, which included two members from the banking sector, looked at the field and concluded, “The leadership came from the top.”

—Richard Bray



### SELECT firms to match opportunities

The federal government’s SELECT system (replacing the SPEC and ACCORD systems), containing a list of pre-qualified real property firms (construction, architects, engineers), matches supplier expertise and services with specific requirements. Depending on the opportunity only one firm may be asked to accept the work, or multiple firms may be asked to compete. Firms wishing to register with SELECT, need a Procurement Business Number, obtainable online from the Supplier Registration Information service at [contractscanada.gc.ca/en/buying-e.htm](http://contractscanada.gc.ca/en/buying-e.htm).

### E-government around the world

A recently released study, *Local E-Government Now: A Worldwide View*, examines municipalities in fourteen countries engaged in the establishment of efficient and effective e-governance. Canada’s leadership is highlighted by successful implementations by the governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and the federal “Government On-Line” initiative.

In Nova Scotia, the eight amalgamated municipalities that form the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) had a long-term goal to deliver better programs and services at a lower cost. By partnering with the province, CBRM successfully delivers timely, accurate financial information, allowing proper costing of both routine and special projects. In New Brunswick, the acknowledged leader in the development of single-window government services is Service New Brunswick (SNB). SNB aimed for an 85 percent satisfaction rate on customer service quality, but is reportedly achieving 92 percent. Other examples include secure e-services in Spain and e-democracy in Norway.

The study (available at [www.sap.com/solutions/industry/publicsector](http://www.sap.com/solutions/industry/publicsector)) was led by two United Kingdom non-profit organizations: the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) and the Society of IT Management.



### Federal resources connect locally

In November SourceCan began to publish Nova Scotia’s tender notices separately from the Canadian Bids feed, allowing clients to link back directly to the province’s site when a tender matches the client’s individual profile. SourceCan clients must now establish a separate individual profile for the Nova Scotia opportunities.