

BC upgrades procurement training



THE BRITISH COLUMBIA government is bringing its procurement training into the 21st century with an overhaul of its curriculum and a revamping of the core competencies for procurement professionals.

The changes stem from the ongoing procurement reform initiative launched by the province shortly after the 2001 election. Mary Speller, director of program services in the Leadership and Learning Centre of the BC Public Service Agency, says that during that review process one of the themes that emerged was the need for more consistent, detailed training across the board for government procurement staff. "As a result of that identified need, the government proceeded to develop a procurement competency framework," says Speller. "We basically set out the learning objectives with the competencies required for staff at a variety of levels, who would be participating in procurement processes for each of the stages of the procurement process."

Seven core competencies for procurement professionals were identified around planning, pre-award, award, administration and monitoring, post contract evaluation, corporate reporting, and vendor relationship management. Those competencies will form the core of the province's new procurement training curriculum with modules being developed around each.

Following a competitive process, a consortium led by National Education Consulting Inc. won the contract. Other consortium members include DC Stevens Consulting Group Inc., Three-e Training, e-Traffic Solutions and Goldstream Business Consulting. All members are Victoria-based.

The request to develop a new curriculum originally came from the Purchasing Commission, under the Ministry of Management Services, which became the Procurement Governance Office in 2002, as well as the Office of the Controller General.

"We have had training in the past, but it needed to be revised," says Speller. "We needed a broader scope of training, and wanted to make sure what we were providing was consistent with competencies."

Development of the new curriculum is in progress and will be delivered in phases over the next four years beginning in January 2005. Development so far includes the Level 1 basic course, which is Web-based; one course each for Levels 2 and 3; and two half-day programs for the executive level. *— Jeff Jedras*



EDS collects for BC

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S REVENUE Management Project initiative seeks to consolidate the province's various revenue collecting systems, many of which cannot communicate with each other, making revenue collection needlessly complicated. In late 2004, the province outsourced the consolidation to EDS Advanced Solutions, a subsidiary of EDS Canada. The BC government hopes to see savings of \$38 million per year over the course of the 10-year contract, which has EDS Advanced Solutions assume ownership of not only the financial IT systems, but also the business processes that track revenue. As well, EDS will absorb some government personnel (about 200), who, when they transfer to the company, will receive additional training in the collections process. The savings from this not-so-small undertaking are to be split between EDS and the province.

Security and privacy issues in the outsourcing are addressed by the following: BC retains ownership of all personal information; data must be stored in Canada and not be accessed from outside the country; a dedicated security and compliance officer must oversee the protection of personal information; and all directors on EDS Advanced Solutions' board must be Canadians residing in Canada. *—*

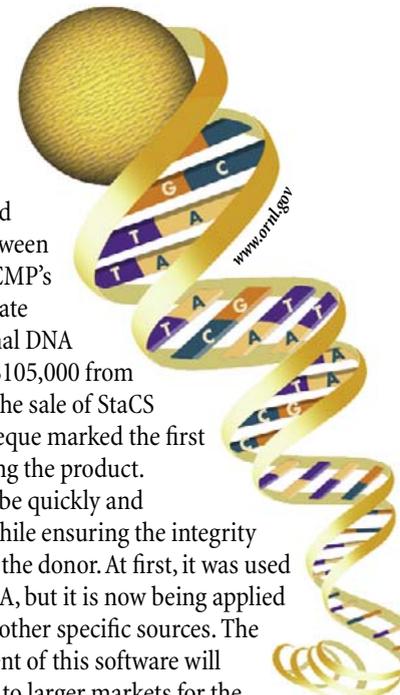


DNA testing tool pays off

THE RCMP AND ANJURA Technology share the intellectual property rights in STaCS™ (Sample Tracking and Control System) software designed and developed in partnership between Anjura and scientists from the RCMP's Forensic Laboratory Services. In late November 2004 the RCMP National DNA Data Bank received a cheque for \$105,000 from Anjura Technology, money from the sale of STaCS to the Illinois State Police. The cheque marked the first significant revenue from marketing the product.

STaCS allows DNA samples to be quickly and accurately analyzed and stored, while ensuring the integrity of the samples and the privacy of the donor. At first, it was used to process convicted-offender DNA, but it is now being applied to processing DNA samples from other specific sources. The continued growth and development of this software will lead to better crime solving tools, to larger markets for the product and more revenue for RCMP research and development.

Summit first covered the deal between Anjura and the RCMP for the development and marketing of STaCS™ in a March 2001 article, "Developing DNA data." See www.summitconnects.com. *—*



Saskatchewan rebuilds fire fighting fleet

THE SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT will invest \$42 million over the next four years to modernize its northern Saskatchewan firefighting fleet. In the effort to expand the fleet's capacity and improve its operational capabilities, infrastructure such as hangers, tarmac, aprons and runways will see improvements; the province's land-based aircraft, used for initial attack on wildfires, will be replaced with a light, fast-flying, twin-turbine-engine aircraft; at least four new retardant-carrying land-based turbine air tankers and three twin-engine turbine guide aircraft will be purchased; and the province's six Canadair CL-215s, amphibious aircraft designed primarily for firefighting, will either be upgraded or renewed.

Saskatchewan's fire suppression air tanker fleet is vital to its fire management strategies which are to: "continue to protect what is most important to people; allow fire to play a more natural, regenerative role in the forest where possible; and, improve [the province's] ability to manage the cost of the fire management program." ❧



Conair Firecat/S2F Tracker
This air tanker is under contract in the provinces of British Columbia, Yukon Territories (Conair Firecat) and Saskatchewan (S2F Tracker).



Canadair CL 415
The provinces of Québec and Ontario operate these modern day skimmer air tankers.



Piper Aerostar PA600
This aircraft is being operated in the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and the Yukon Territories.

Photos: www3.gov.ab.ca/sd/wildfires/airtankers.html

Saskatchewan restructures property management department

IN MID NOVEMBER 2004, the Saskatchewan government introduced the *Public Works and Services Act 2004*, which, along with the *Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act*, will transform the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation (SPMC) from a Treasury Board Crown to a department of Executive Government. As part of Executive Government, SPMC will have more operational flexibility such as: the ability to amortize capital expenditures – the cost of acquiring or upgrading an asset is spread over the span of its useful life – and to offer services and recover costs by charging for those services. The transition takes place April 1, 2005, at which time SPMC will become the Department of Property Management. ❧

Talk, talk and more talk about P3s

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL for Public-Private Partnerships (CCPPP) held its 12th annual conference in Toronto in late November 2004. Well-attended sessions on the first day clarified the extent of Canada's infrastructure deficit and the increasing pressures on governments at every level to find the money and means to address the issue.

A National Research Council visiting researcher, Dr. Guy Félio illustrated the situation in Canadian municipalities quite clearly, pointing to the federal government's declining role in infrastructure maintenance and repair. These responsibilities are devolving to our cities and towns – the level of government with the least actual money and resources to deal with the issues and the least ability to increase its revenues. According to Dr. Félio, the dollars we currently direct to infrastructure indicate that we Canadians expect our buildings and roads "to last 350 years." Putting off until tomorrow only widens the infrastructure gap – the difference between needed investment and the funds available.

In the effort to find a solution, public-private partnerships (P3s) have become a procurement tool with potential. *Summit* has been following the evolution of the P3 solution for several years, having identified P3s as a procurement vehicle – goods or services bought using a contract instrument and taxpayer dollars. As a non-traditional procurement vehicle, P3s receive a lot of scrutiny – sometimes uncomfortably intense scrutiny. But, public scrutiny is part of public procurement, and more so today than ever before. As well, a P3 usually signals a significant change in who delivers the service and how. People are understandably cautious about that much change, especially when it comes to basic necessities of life, such as water, electricity and health.

Many private sector companies exhibit discomfort with the level of scrutiny and debate that P3s undergo – after all they have generally been able to do business between themselves without anyone caring much about what they do and how, as long as they are profitable and remain within the law. Things are different now. Scandals in both the public and private sectors and the protesting voice of some unions have raised the awareness of the general public to a level of suspicion that may only subside once a few P3s have been successfully achieved, and perhaps most importantly, are perceived as such. Public suspicion also makes the necessary political support for P3s more difficult to obtain – and retain – even when the partnership is recognized by politicians to be a valid solution.

The council, its members and those involved in the P3 market recognize that to change that level of concern and distrust – to achieve the "transfer of public trust" that ex-Winnipeg mayor, Glen Murray spoke of at the conference – will require both the public and private partners to do a lot of clear communication and consultation.

Citizens and the media need to know and understand the reasoning behind the partnership and what outcomes the partnership will achieve. As well, both the public and private partners need to provide enough



information on oversight and regulation of the change to reassure citizens that they will receive the benefits and not be “ripped off” in the process.

Last but not least, a P3 needs to win the support of organized labour. Lew Adams, former secretary general of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (train drivers union) in the United Kingdom spoke at the conference and told his audience that the task is indeed difficult, but it can be done. He cautioned that the “private sector must not let us down. Consult the workforce, tell the absolute truth... what the end game is and what the plan is.”

The CCPPP released a poll at the conference, executed on its behalf by Environics Research, that indicates quite a high level of acceptance for P3s (even in the health sector) by Canadians all across the country; other polls indicate that those touched more personally by a specific P3 often exhibit much more cautious support or, at times, outright rejection. Given those results, there may be reason for optimism that good communications will contribute to more – and more successful – P3s.

One stream of the conference focused entirely on communications and there seemed to be general consensus that Partnerships BC is on the right track. It has a structured communications plan in place for every stage of a P3 deal that keeps the public and media well and clearly informed on what is taking place. Partnerships BC also provides a value for money report within 60 days of contract award that includes a public sector comparator (defined on strategis.ca as the calculation of the in-house cost of delivering a project and/or service) used to frame and measure the parameters of the partnership. You can see the *Sierra Yoyo Desan Resource Road Report* at www.partnershipsbc.ca/pdf/SYD_VFM_Nov_4_04.pdf

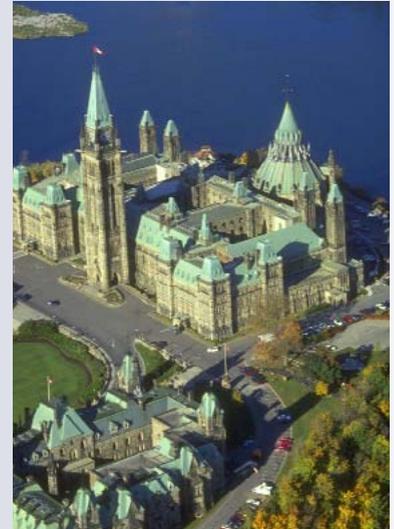
Another stream in the conference program revolved around the burgeoning interest of Aboriginal groups and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in P3s. New projects like the Kamloops Indian Band's Sun River Resort Community and utility partnership with Terasen were in the limelight. *Summit* will follow the development and progress of these initiatives and others in future editions of the magazine.

A third stream was dedicated to finance and the procurement process. The program said that standardization of process and contracts, performance-based payments, and audit and evaluation linking to transparency would be discussed, but despite the open communications being advocated in other conference sessions, media were not welcome at these sessions. It is true that media cannot ask for, or expect, full disclosure all the time but, to paraphrase Don Cayo from the *Vancouver Sun*, one of the presenters in the communications stream, if you behave like you have something to hide, people will believe you have something to hide. The CCPPP opened sessions in this stream to the media later in the day. ~~~

– Anne Phillips

New contractor to manage federal buildings

TORONTO-BASED SNC-LAVALIN ProFac (www.snclavalinprofac.com/index.html, wholly owned by SNC-Lavalin Group Inc.) has won the contract to manage 319 federal government buildings across Canada. The contract, worth \$490 million in the first year and \$350 million per year each following year, will run from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2009. Services to be provided under the contract include: building inspection, cleaning and operations, landscaping, new construction, repairs, space optimization and refits. SNC-Lavalin ProFac demonstrated that it could manage the properties to the government's stated expectations, and save the federal government \$50 million annually. Brookfield Lepage Johnson Controls (BLJC) had been providing the service to the federal government since 1997 and will continue to do so until their contract ends, March 31, 2005. ~~~



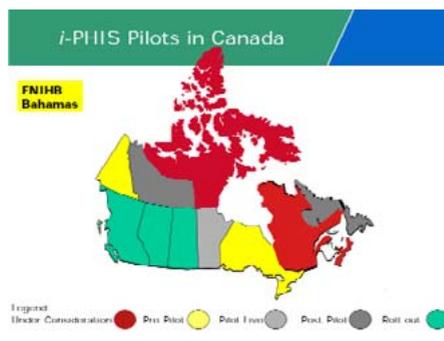
Public health information system expands

LAST SUMMER HEALTH Canada awarded Pangaea Systems Inc. (www.pangaeainc.com) a contract, estimated between \$4-6 million, to modify the department's integrated public health information system (i-PHIS). Pangaea Systems, a privately held company based in Calgary, designed and developed i-PHIS. It was originally used by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BC-CDC). Modifications to the system will leverage new Web technologies and address growth requirements.



i-PHIS is a Web-based client health record system that includes collecting and collating data such as lab results and outbreak reports, tracking and reporting. It allows communicable disease surveillance and immunization information to be shared among multiple providers of public health through secure access to one client record.

The Canadian Integrated Public Health Surveillance (CIPHS) chose i-PHIS as the standard for its case management system. Health Canada has made i-PHIS available to all Canadian public health jurisdictions without licensing fees. It is currently deployed in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario. Other pilot projects are underway, and the Yukon and Nunavut have expressed interest. CIPHS is a strategic alliance of public health and IT professionals working to build an integrated suite of computer and database tools intended specifically for Canadian public health professionals. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/csc-ccs/ciphs_e.html), "these tools will support the systematic collection and collation of health surveillance data as a by-product of the normal work of public health professionals. The data will be used to support evidence-based public health decisions."



Nova Scotia renews medical equipment

HOSPITALS ALL across the province of Nova Scotia are seeing a renewal of their medical equipment, thanks to a \$15 million federal medical equipment fund. Equipment purchases will include cardiovascular, X-ray, and surgical equipment, a CT scanner, and other technology to support bedside care.



Three new mammography units that will provide better quality images and detailed information are being purchased for the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program – at a cost of \$1.2 million.

Another \$1.5 million will help expand the Picture Archiving Communication Systems (PACS) network. PACS stores and transfers X-rays, CT scans, and MRI images electronically among participating hospitals across the region. This allows health providers to consult with doctors and specialists, and to diagnose and begin treatment more quickly.

About another \$1 million will be distributed across the province for equipment that will assist nurses and others who work with patients. The long-term care sector will receive \$625,000 and \$128,000 will be invested in training more Nova Scotians to operate the additional medical equipment.

The remaining dollars will be distributed across Nova Scotia's nine district health authorities and the IWK Health Centre (Izaak Walton Killam Health Centre).

The Capital District Health Authority's \$5.6 million will pay for equipment purchased earlier to reduce wait times for orthopaedic surgeries and will purchase instruments to replace discarded devices and a variety of other surgical equipment.

The IWK Health Centre's (www.iwk.nshealth.ca) more than \$1.3 million will purchase a multi-slice CT scanner.

Additional purchases include a replacement X-ray unit, a sterilization unit, a digital fluoroscopy unit, a replacement ultrasound machine, upgrading for cardiac machinery, equipment for endoscopy procedures and, for Cape Breton Regional Hospital, a new, state-of-the-art patient monitoring system for the intensive care, coronary care and telemetry units.