



THE FAST **TRACK**

Piggybacking onto national contract enables county to meet landfill needs

With the amount of waste processed expected to more than triple when the existing landfill closes and county services are transferred to what had been an industrial landfill, Cowlitz County, Washington, officials decided a larger track-type tractor would be necessary to keep pace with the increased tonnage.

The Cowlitz County Landfill processes approximately 120,000 tons of waste annually, and will be retired in November. At that time, county waste services will be moved to what had been an industrial landfill. Waste processed at the new site is estimated at 400,000 tons per year.

Loads delivered to the landfill will range from 28 to 30 tons. “We need a machine that can push 50 loads of that size per day,” said Don Olson, solid waste superintendent.

The Public Works Department decision to

purchase a Cat D8T Track-type Tractor was an easy one: The machine has the reliability and dozing power necessary for the job. “That was the only unit that met our specs,” Olson said.

But to meet the November move to the new landfill, the county’s usual acquisition process of writing specs and soliciting bids needed to be expedited.

The NJPA Option

Olson opted to purchase the machine by piggybacking onto an existing contract through the National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA). The decision resulted in the quickest purchase of heavy equipment in Olson’s 27-year career.

NJPA provides a multitude of contracted products, equipment, and services to schools, governmental agencies, and other non-profit

entities. NJPA creates a business and service partnership between buyers and suppliers that enables the purchase of goods and services quickly and at a great savings through nationally leveraged, competitively bid contracts.

Cowlitz County's purchase of a D8T Track-type Tractor was made through an existing Caterpillar contract. Through the Cat Dealer network, NJPA members are able to select from contracts for more than 120 models spanning 14 product families.

During Caterpillar's partnership with NJPA, 407 units (128 specific models) have been sold to 186 governmental agencies. This has resulted in an estimated \$25 million in savings.

Olson called Peterson Cat on a Tuesday in May of this year. The next Monday a purchase order was placed. Writing specs and putting the machine out to bid would have taken six weeks. By purchasing using an existing NJPA contract, the process was completed in six days.

"NJPA contracts take the hassle out of purchasing. We didn't have to write specs or solicit bids—those things had already been done," Olson said of the contract to purchase the D8T. "That saved us quite a bit of time."

Like A Menu

The key to success when purchasing through NJPA contracts is knowing exactly the type of machine to be purchased.

"It's kind of like a menu. You can get the machine that you want equipped with the options you want," said Olson. "Bids are very thorough. Make sure that the bid you select has all the options and features that your application requires."

The county board had pre-approved the machine purchase in the budget, so the purchase didn't require board approval. NJPA contract had already solicited bids, so the bidding requirement was met.

NJPA awards and hosts its own contracts under the authority of Minnesota State Laws. Because NJPA contracts are solicited, awarded and monitored by a public agency with a publicly elected board of directors, bidding requirements are met.

Because NJPA contracts are leveraged nationally, contracted suppliers and member agencies are able to work smarter and more efficiently as they do business with each other.

And in Cowlitz County, an NJPA contract with Caterpillar has resulted in the purchase of a machine that will effectively meet dozing needs at the new landfill for years to come. 🚧



BY THE NUMBERS

The present Cowlitz County landfill opened in 1976, and is projected to close this year with a total of 2.05 million cubic yards of solid waste volume. The landfill that will begin accepting county waste in November was developed by a private company for the deposit of industrial timber wastes in 1993. The landfill takes industrial waste, as well as construction and demolition waste and some commercial waste.



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DON OLSON, solid waste superintendant