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A&M official says it's easier to work with local vendors

University looking for minority suppliers

By Matt Diedrich
Reporter

Representatives of Texas A&M's Purchasing and Stores Department told a group of local vendors Thursday that they would like to do more business with local, small and minority-owned businesses.

Wes Donaldson, the director of the department, said during a seminar presented by A&M and Bryan-College Station's Chamber of Commerce that the University would prefer to buy from local businesses for many reasons.

"It's easier, quicker and in many cases cheaper to do business with local suppliers," he said.

Donaldson added, however, that the University cannot legally give preferential treatment to local businesses because of the State Purchasing Act of 1979, which requires public institutions using state funds to invite competitive bidding for purchases and to choose the low bidder.

The solution, he said, is for the businesses to make more competitive bids.

Of the \$53 million spent by the Purchasing and Stores Department in the last fiscal year, about 20 percent went to small businesses and only 1 percent to minority-owned businesses, Donaldson said.

"We have a real problem locating minority suppliers," he said, "but we surely are interested in increasing the percentage of purchases we make from minorities."

Mary Sue Goldwater, a buyer for the department, said the University uses several source books and directories to locate minority suppliers, yet these suppliers are sometimes already out of business when the University sends out bid invitations.

Goldwater said the small and minority suppliers are also often not competitive enough.

"We're always obligated to order from the low bidder, and not just necessarily from a small or minority business," she said.

Senior buyer Gwen Singer said to help local businesses compete, the department has established its own list of bidders organized by the products or services offered. Vendors can get their names on the list by filling out a bidder's application.

In addition, the Stores Department has a local purchase authorization form for items the department does not have in stock. The form allows University departments to buy up to \$250 worth of merchandise from local vendors, bypassing the bidding process.

Terminally ill patients can live, die at home under hospice care

By Shannon Boyesen
Reporter

Hospice care allows doctors to give terminally ill patients the chance to live and die at home, an official from the Texas A&M College of Medicine said Thursday.

Mary Alice Pisani, assistant to the dean of the college, told an audience of about 20 in 160 Medical Sciences Building that specially trained individuals are on hand at the patients' homes to provide pain control and emotional support.

Linda Bump, a registered nurse, and Margie Thompson, a social worker with the Visiting Nurse Association Hospice of Houston, led a discussion on philosophy, criteria for admissions, principles of hospice care and the role of the hospice team.

Bump said a person usually must be diagnosed with terminal cancer and have a life expectancy of six months or less to be considered for the program. Bump said only 5 percent of the patients in the program have other terminal illnesses.

"The family as well as the patient

must be aware of the impending death," she said, "and the physician must support the decision of a home death."

Bump said a registered nurse will first go to the home of the dying person and assess the physical and emotional needs of the patient as well as the family.

The nurse will then make up a home care plan designed exclusively for that family, Bump said.

Social workers and volunteers will then visit the home three times a week and provide the family with emotional and financial counsel. They will also instruct the family as to how best to attend to patients in their last hours.

Once a patient has died, the program also provides the family with post-death bereavement counsel for a year.

Pisani said she hopes to be able to start a hospice program in the Bryan-College Station area. She said the program does not require certification of medical competency, although, there is some training and commitment involved. But she says, "Any caring person will do."

Texas lawmakers probe CIA's link to plane crash

WASHINGTON (AP) — Texas lawmakers are probing reports of CIA links to the crash of a cargo plane in San Antonio, while federal investigators on Thursday continued to pick through the wreckage searching for the cause.

Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-San Antonio, charged that the crash of a cargo plane at Kelly Air Force Base and that of another cargo plane in Nicaragua were part of a covert CIA-backed network to supply anti-Sandinista Contra rebels.

Gonzalez said his office has reports that supply flights are continu-

ing to go through his home city despite the Oct. 4 crash that killed three civilian crewmen.

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, a member of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, said that shortly after the crash at Kelly, he asked both the CIA and the Air Force to respond to charges of a covert arms pipeline to the Contras.

"The CIA made an inquiry and later reported back to me that they had absolutely no involvement with either the plane or its cargo," he said.

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