

CONCERNED CONTRACTORS

of Pennsylvania

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CONCERNED CONTRACTORS APPLAUD MUHLENBERG & COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS ON BID PROCESS SELECTION

Muhlenberg & Columbia Borough School boards request multiple and single prime bids for upcoming renovation construction projects

(Harrisburg, PA) – The Muhlenberg School Board has unanimously agreed to award contracts for a \$13 million middle school renovation and expansion project. The board sought bids using both the multiple and single prime bid process.

The board agreed to award the contracts to five different contractors – one each for general construction, plumbing, HVAC, electrical and hazardous materials and abatement.

In a January 2009, *Reading Eagle* article, School board president Otto W. Voit III was quoted as saying, "In the end, the board learned that the single prime contractor would have cost the district nearly \$200,000 more than the multiple-prime contractors. We saw everything side by side and we were able to make an informed decision for the best of the taxpayers."

Columbia Borough School District recently listed a request for proposal for an upcoming addition and renovations project for the Columbia Borough Jr/Sr High School located on Ironville Pike in Columbia, PA. The Columbia School board is seeking proposals using both the multiple and single prime bid process.

The Concerned Contractors, an advocacy group organized to protect and promote the rights of plumbing, electrical, HVAC and general contractors, applauds the school boards for seeking bids from multiple contracts. Thousands of small business owners will have the opportunity to participate in local projects, rather than only a few large general contractors/brokers being allowed to submit bids.

The Concerned Contractors believe multiple-prime bid contracts have a proven track record of saving money and can help public school projects come in under budget. By using bonded multiple-prime contractors, an additional layer of experience and reliability is provided.

Dennis W. Pierce of the Farfield Company of Lititz, PA said, "The cost to bid a project both ways is

minimal, but the multiple prime savings have been significant. In some cases, the multiple prime bids are saving school districts millions over the single prime bids for the same project."

In February 2009, a Task Force on Mandate Waivers presented a report to Governor Ed Rendell and the PA General Assembly on the testimony and examined evidence gathered over a six month period regarding the multiple-prime bid vs. single prime bid contracts for school construction projects. The report suggested that school districts should not rely solely on a single prime bid. Instead, the number one recommendation of the Task Force was to require school districts that wanted a waiver to solicit bids using both a single and multiple prime approach and select the less expensive option.

The Task Force report recommended that any and all future waivers of multiple-prime construction issued by the Department of Education should solicit single prime bids as well as multiple-prime bids, with the district utilizing the least expensive/most responsible bid option.

About the Concerned Contractors

The Concerned Contractors of Pennsylvania is a coalition of open shop and union shop contractors (plumbers, electricians, HVAC and building trades) that have organized to represent the many small business owners and construction workers across the state. The mission of the coalition is to bring unfair and needlessly expensive bidding to the attention of the parents, students, school board officials, legislators and the media. For more information on the Concerned Contractors, please visit their website at <http://concernedcontractors.homestead.com/> or contact Linda Rhinehart at Lkrhinehart@att.net or (717) 571-2567.

Sources:

Mandate Waiver Task Force Recommendations

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12_initiatives/lib/k12_initiatives/TFRecommendations.pdf