

# West Virginia's One Card

Ed : 2 Winter 2010/2011

## Welcome Back to the One Card



By West Virginia State Auditor  
Glen B. Gainer III

Nearly three-quarters of all organizations within the United States use purchasing cards, both those in the private and the public sectors.

The number is high for two major reasons – the traditional way to pay is costly and a p-card vastly simplifies the process.

That's why I initiated the statewide p-card program in 1996 and the local government program in 2008. I thank our state legislators, who had the foresight to approve the program. Since then, the local government program has expanded to include 134 entities. And the number continues to grow.

We welcome the Town of Alderson and the Nicholas County Health Department – our newest participants.

## City of Ranson Embraces New Payment Method

A purchasing card option for local governments couldn't come soon enough for Ranson, a city of 4,000 in Jefferson County.

In late 2007, when city finance director Christopher Bontoft learned of Auditor Gainer's efforts to introduce the program, he got excited.

"This is something we had been trying to do ourselves," Bontoft said. "We were asking our staff to think of new ways to develop efficiencies and save money for our citizens."

Still, the West Virginia Legislature had not yet approved a measure that would allow local entities to use the card, as state agencies had been doing since 1996.

That changed on March 8, 2008, when legislators adopted House Bill 4121, originally sponsored by Dels. Ron Fragale, Joe DeLong, Brent Boggs, Larry Barker and Jeff Eldridge. This was the final version agreed to by both the House of Delegates and the state Senate. It went into effect that June.

By the spring of 2009, staff in Ranson began using its 20 purchasing cards to pay for trash hauling, workers' compensation payments, concession equipment for a new visitors' center, travel, metal plates for streets and other expenses.

"We now have greater control for employees who must travel to seminars," Bontoft said. "We put it on the card. Everything is tracked. It's in the budget and we're not looking for the extra step of having a check. There's greater flexibility."

Another positive aspect is the rebate. Ranson currently receives quarterly rebate checks of \$1,000 to \$1,400 from the program. Bontoft also cited partner United Bank's move to integrate its software system with the municipal system, which further streamlines the program.

Bontoft worked with purchasing card officials from the State Auditor's Office, namely Jack Berry, Jessica Perdue, Scott White and Locke Wysong, to work out the initial bugs and adjust card allowances based on identifying typical spending patterns.

For instance, Bontoft discovered that he had set daily spending limits too low. Sometimes the public works department needs to purchase budgeted capital equipment, he said. If the department can use the p-card to make the purchase, it will do so in order to receive the rebate.



From left, Chris Bontoft works with his assistant, Lori Nice, as she reviews Ranson's master statement from United Bank. The City of Ranson was one of the very first local governments to use the State Auditor's Office purchasing card.

"We've increased our credit limit already," he said. "As the program develops, we will make adjustments as we need to. The staffs at both the State Auditor's Office and United Bank have been extremely helpful in making the p-card implementation a smooth one."

Currently, Ranson employees use the purchasing card for about 20 percent of the city's total expenses. Some vendors like to receive the actual check, Bontoft said. Ideally and eventually, however, he hopes the city could put every purchase on the card.

Bontoft said he anticipates that many more West Virginia cities and counties will sign on to the program as officials realize its utility, its cost savings and its rebates. Rolling it out slowly and steadily is the best approach for a program that has made West Virginia a leader in the field.

"West Virginia is on the forefront," he said. "It's a really flexible and smart system they've created."

Therese Cox, Public Affairs Specialist

## Top 10 Local Purchasing Card Vendors for 2010

1. WM ezPay (utilities): total of \$1.37 million (average transaction \$7,091)
2. Brickstreet Mutual Insurance: total of \$569,471 (average transaction \$16,749)
3. Casto & Harris: total of \$538,556 (average transaction \$2,849)
4. The C.I. Thornburg Co.: total of \$502,012 (average transaction \$3,486)
5. Shortcreek Landfill: total of \$428,159 (average transaction \$26,759)
6. HD Supply Waterworks: total of \$322,723 (average transaction \$8,722)
7. Apply Valley Waste Service: total of \$306,998 (average transaction \$27,908)
8. Belmont Carson Petro: total of \$283,567 (average transaction \$4,726)
9. Intrado Inc.: total of \$245,309 (average transaction \$27,256)
10. State Electric: total of \$193,425 (average transaction \$14,878)



With proper training of its users, the purchasing card process runs smoothly.

It is important that all cardholders complete a minimum amount of education.

Jerry Isaacs, Training Coordinator, is available to conduct either group or individual training, free of charge. Call him at 304-558-2261, Ext. 5110 or e-mail at [jerry.isaacs@wvsao.gov](mailto:jerry.isaacs@wvsao.gov).

## FAQ Corner

**Why should I ask a vendor if he or she accepts VISA? Or, to ask in a different way, why shouldn't I ask a vendor if he accepts a purchasing card?**

**Just like a check or cash, the purchasing card is a "method of payment."**

**If you ask a vendor if he accepts the state's purchasing card, it may confuse him. He may not realize that the card is a VISA. He then may give you an incorrect answer as to**

**whether or not you can pay with the purchasing card.**

**Instead, focus on asking the vendor if he accepts Visa. Also, ask if there are any transaction fees added to the invoice.**

**Most vendors already have incorporated the cost of accepting credit cards into their costs of doing business. So, if you pay with cash or check, the vendor actually is making more money from your purchase.**

Jessica Perdue, P-Card Specialist

# Analyzing Your Purchasing Card Program

The State Auditor's Office Local Government Purchasing Card staff is dedicated to helping you build and maintain a successful purchasing card system.

To get the most out of your purchasing card program, take time to analyze how you are using your cards. The best way to do this is to review periodically the limit placed on each individual card and compare it to the total transaction amount on that card each month.

By doing this, you can see if you have any cards out there that carry a higher limit than what is needed. Carrying an excessive limit on a card not only increases your risk of fraud but also increases a cardholder's likelihood to spend more than necessary. By keeping your limits close to your monthly spend, you can eliminate the risk of overspending your budget.

Another way to ensure that you are getting the most from your purchasing cards is to compare what vendors you currently are paying with the purchasing cards to what vendors you could be paying with your cards.

One service we offer to local government agencies is a matched vendor list. It indicates what vendors currently accept Visa cards for payment. If you have not supplied us with a copy of your vendor list and wish to have it matched with Visa's database, contact your local government representative for more information.

If you compare the invoices you pay to your matched vendor list, you can get an idea of how many bills you could be paying with your purchasing card. Paying every bill possible with your cards can further reduce the amount of checks you write while maximizing the amount of rebate paid back to you.

Our regional representatives can help you analyze your card usage and make suggestions on how to improve your program.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your local representative for assistance.

Catherine Fazzini, P-Card Specialist

---

## Auditor Sets Budget Workshops

The Local Government Services Division of the State Auditor's Office has lined up several regional budget preparation workshops for county and municipal governments.

The half-day workshops offer hands-on training dedicated to the basics of local government budget preparation – preparing, approving and adopting a budget. Other topics include budget revisions, property tax rates and special excess levies.

To register, call Karen Drain in the Clarksburg office: 304-627-2417.

Those workshops that occur in February and March follow.

### County workshops:

- Clarksburg, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 3 (registration deadline is Jan. 31)
- Charleston, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 8 (registration deadline is Feb. 3)
- Martinsburg, 9:00 a.m. to noon Feb. 16 (registration deadline is Feb. 10)
- Wheeling, 9:00 a.m. to noon Feb. 25 (registration deadline is Feb. 21)

### Municipal workshops:

- Charleston, 9:00 a.m. to noon Feb. 9 (registration deadline is Feb. 3)
- Martinsburg, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Feb. 15 (registration deadline is Feb. 10)
- Wheeling, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Feb. 24 (registration deadline is Feb. 21)
- Pennsboro, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. March 1 (registration deadline is Feb. 24)

## Professionally Speaking

Of the only eight certified purchasing card professionals in West Virginia, six work in the State Auditor’s Office. And the seventh partners with us in the local government purchasing card program.

Congratulations to Catherine Fazzini and Jessica Perdue, our newest Certified Purchasing Card Professionals (CPCPs), as designated by the National Association of Purchasing Card Professionals.

Catherine and Jessica have joined the others in our office who have qualified for this prestigious credential. It recognizes professionals who possess the education, skills and experience to be successful.

The others are:

- Amy Lewis, Executive Director of the State and Local Government Purchasing Card Programs
- Jack Berry, Director of the Local Government Purchasing Card Program
- Jim Smith, Director of Purchasing Card Operations (State P-Card Program)
- Jerry Isaacs, Local Government Purchasing Card Specialist

Karen Inghram of United Bank, who works closely with the State Auditor’s Office, also has achieved CPCP status. Just 288 professionals in the United States have qualified for this credential, according to the National Association of Purchasing Card Professionals. West Virginia’s number represents almost 3 percent of all U.S. professionals receiving the honor.

The program started in 2006 and requires an applicant to excel on a stringent written certification examination.

The 1,000-member national association offers continuing education and peer networking through its website, newsletter, annual conference and regional meetings. For more information, go to [www.napcp.org](http://www.napcp.org).

Therese Cox, Public Affairs Specialist



For additional info please contact:

Northern Division

Catherine Fazzini, P-Card Specialist – [catherine.fazzini@wvsao.gov](mailto:catherine.fazzini@wvsao.gov); 304-627-2415

Southern Division

Jessica Perdue, P-Card Specialist – [jessica.perdue@wvsao.gov](mailto:jessica.perdue@wvsao.gov); 304-558-2261, Ext. 4007

Eastern Panhandle Division

Locke Wysong, P-Card Specialist – [locke.wysong@wvsao.gov](mailto:locke.wysong@wvsao.gov); 304-433-0010 ©

West Virginia’s One Card Editor

Therese Cox: [therese.cox@wvsao.gov](mailto:therese.cox@wvsao.gov); 304-558-2261, Ext. 2122

**State Auditor’s Office  
Glen B. Gainer III, State Auditor**

**State and Local Government Purchasing Card Programs  
Amy Lewis, Executive Director - [amy.lewis@wvsao.gov](mailto:amy.lewis@wvsao.gov); 304-558-2261, Ext. 2105**

**Local Government Purchasing Card Program  
Jack Berry, Director – [jack.berry@wvsao.gov](mailto:jack.berry@wvsao.gov); 304-558-2261, Ext. 4009**