New York pushes procurement transparency and accessibility

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To the satisfaction of all those doing business or wanting to do business with the state of New York, Governor David A. Patterson and the State legislature have put together some outstanding additions to the 1995 Procurement Stewardship Act in the hopes of increasing transparency and accessibility of state contracts.

The impetus of these changes include the Governor and legislature's desire to spur economic development in New York State's small and minority or women owned businesses and a series of public hearings held in 2005 and 2008 by the State Assembly and the Office of General Services (OGS) individually to address procurement concerns. Improved efficiency by the streamlining of procurement is an additional motive, although the State is being careful not to compromise social and economic goals in the process.

The 1995 Procurement Stewardship Act was originally set to expire June 30, 2008, but is extended with the current legislation for an additional 4 years. Highlights from the legislature include:

- Agencies must provide justification for non-competitive procurements and post the argument on the agency website
- Agencies must post information on winning bidders to their website
- OGS will likewise post justifications for selections on centralized contracts to their website
- Department of Economic Development will publish the procurement opportunity newsletter daily and it will be available for free to all Internet users
- State will investigate an **e-Procurement System**
- State will streamline procurement while supporting social and economic goals by encouraging regional contracts and maintaining open enrollment for centralized contracts
- Municipalities will be able to use centralized contracts
- Process for debriefing losing bidders will be formalized and made more accessible