

REPORT OF THE SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL SERVICES GROUP

The eighteen member communities of the Southeastern Regional Services Group (SERSG) have continued to benefit from the provision of procurement and other services to their municipalities during 2006. Lara Thomas has served as regional administrator of SERSG since 2004.

One of the organization's major accomplishments has been keeping dues at a reasonable level without an increase since July 1, 2003. The regional administrator has accomplished this by implementing cost savings measures including bundling phone and internet services, seeking out less expensive payroll services, participating in SERSG contracts for paper and office supplies, and making better use of technology to cut or maintain costs.

Cooperative procurements for Paper and DPW Supplies and Water and Sewer Treatment Chemicals were held in the spring and for DPW Services in the fall. Initial review of state and other municipal contracts reveals that SERSG procurements continue to yield lower prices on many DPW Supplies and Services for municipalities.

In addition to procurement work, Ms. Thomas worked with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions to coordinate a local training available to conservation commissioners state-wide. Surveys of interest were conducted and the training was held in the spring and summer in Easton.

With many Board members describing the need to enhance employee morale, Ms. Thomas worked with LifeWatch Employee Assistance program to develop a March seminar entitled, "Building A Peaceful Work Environment" Almost 40 people from member communities participated, and the evaluations of the seminar were overwhelmingly positive. Similar trainings are being discussed for the future.

A representative of the State Office of Women and Minority Business Assistance (SOWMBA) made a presentation at a fall Board of Directors meeting to clarify new guidelines for municipalities involving contracts to Minority and Women Business vendors.

Ms. Thomas was invited to speak to the Wrentham Board of Selectmen over the summer to clarify the cooperative procurement process and to explain how membership benefits the town.

The Pipeline Project continued to be active during the year with Ms. Thomas coordinating Committee meetings, the RFP process and hiring of a community relations firm, and the RFP process for a construction supervisor for the projects. Mitigation negotiations were finalized in two of four communities during 2006, and the Committee is hopeful that construction on municipal rights of way may be able to begin in spring 2007.

Finally, monthly meetings of the Board of Directors and the Highway Superintendents continued to provide valuable opportunities for representatives from member communities to share concerns and receive ideas and feedback about a wide variety of issues affecting municipalities.