

**October 14, 2003**

Faxed and emailed to local media

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## **Fulton Receives National Purchasing Department Award**

The Fulton County School System's Purchasing Department has joined an elite group of organizations that have received the 2003 Excellence in Procurement Award from the National Purchasing Institute (NPI) and Institute of Supply Management (ISM).

Fulton is one of only three school systems in the nation to receive the award, which recognizes organizations that are innovative, professional, productive, and have strong leadership. The announcement marks the third consecutive year that Fulton's Purchasing Department has achieved this honor.

Purchasing Director Wilma A. Gibbs-Matthews credits her staff's approach to "working smarter, not harder" as a factor for receiving the award. Technology, such as their award-winning web site allows vendors to register online and download solicitations. This allows her staff to focus on more important tasks such as awarding system-wide contracts instead of mailing solicitations and thousands of purchase orders daily. This also provides a substantial savings for the entire school system. A "virtual mall" has been created for employees to order office supplies, custodial supplies and other materials online, allowing schools to shop whenever – and wherever – needed. Since all teachers have been equipped with personal laptop computers, this means that classroom materials can be ordered by the teachers themselves, instead of a more time-consuming process that usually places an added workload on a school bookkeeper or professional assistant.

"We are empowering our employees and making the purchasing process simpler and providing contracts for items needed to perform our daily mission," said Mrs. Matthews. "This allows all of us to use our time and resources more effectively, and that ultimately allows for the best quality product for the best price being used in the classroom."

Ms. Tommie Goodgames, Purchasing Agent, will formally accept the award for the Purchasing Department at the National Purchasing Institute's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Products Exposition in Austin, Texas, later this month.

The National Purchasing Institute and the Institute of Supply Management represents purchasing officials employed by corporate, national, state and local governments, educational institutions, and tax-supported and public entities throughout the country.

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