

Getting It There and Back

Reflections about RFPs, Contracting, & Start-Up
in Providing Courier Services to Libraries

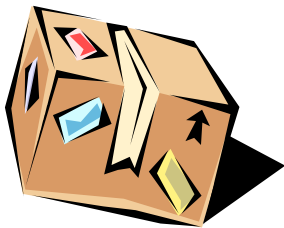
by

Bonnie Juergens

Executive Director

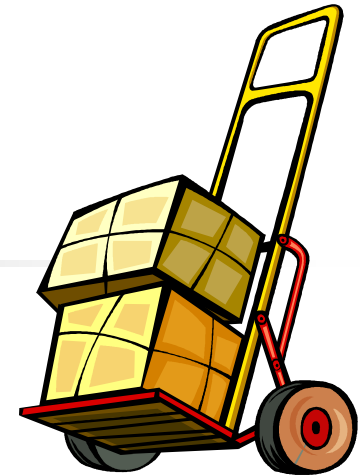
Amigos Library Services

September 15, 2006





Context: The Southwestern Landscape



- Amigos Library Services, Inc.
 - 765 members in 14 states, primarily AZ, AR, NM, OK, TX
 - Trans-Amigos Express, TExpress courier program with 216 participating sites, 180 in TX
- Amigos is contractor to Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)
- Marquis Messengers (EDGE Logistics Services Corp.) is contractor to Amigos

Context, cont.

The evolution of TexShare (TS)

- 1993-94: THECB funding to develop a plan for TexShare, a resource-sharing program for 53 publicly-funded colleges & universities in TX
- 1994-96: THECB funded and two member institutions hosted; programs included:
 - Consortial database purchases
 - Interlibrary loan protocol
 - Reciprocal card program
 - TexTreasures grants program
- 1996-99: TS membership expanded to include 50 privately-funded higher education and 100 community colleges; Amigos administered the TexShare program under contract to THECB and then TSLAC





Context, cont.

The evolution of TexShare (TS)



- 1996–97: A TS courier service working group was established in 1996 & courier service commenced in November 1997
- 1999: TS membership expanded to include 500 public libraries throughout the state
- 2000–to date: TexShare program management resides in TSLAC; Amigos is contractor to provide courier and other services



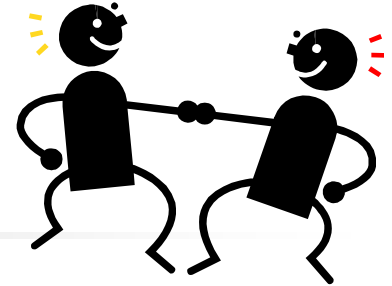
Context, cont.

The evolution of TAE/TExpress



- Nov 1997: TExpress started with 79 participating libraries
- 1999: Expanded service into Oklahoma and dubbed the larger program Trans Amigos Express (TAE)
- 2000: Expanded service into New Mexico
- 2002: Expanded service into Arkansas
- GOAL: Expand into Arizona, thus covering all Amigos “core” states

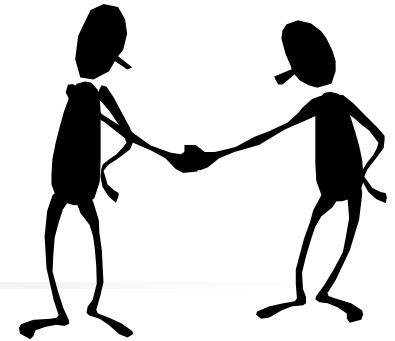
RFP Processes: Service Provider Relationship



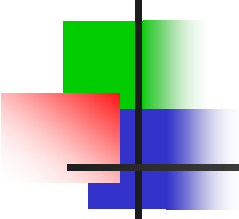
- 1996-97: TExpress Working Group program planning
- Feb 1997: TexShare RFP to 6 service providers
 - 4 pages, of which 2 are 52 site names & locations
 - Received no compliant responses
- May 1997: Received proposal from CEDS
 - 3 pages plus sample label, invoice, & current customer info



Contracts: Service Provider Relationship



- Amigos contracts with service provider
 - 10 contracts covering Nov 1997-Aug 2007
 - 1 page plus list of site locations
 - Contents:
 - Term (range from 1 to 16 months)
 - Services (M-F pick-up & delivery of packaged items among 200+ participating sites in TX, OK, NM, AR)
 - Rates and monthly payment cycle, net 15 (10)
 - Termination (60 days written notice)



RFP Processes: Contracting with the State



- Examples of contracting requirements:
 - 1996: 26 page contract to administer total TexShare program for 12 months (THECB)
 - 2000: 65 page contract to provide courier service for TexShare for 6 months (TSLAC)
 - 2003: 70 page contract to provide courier service for TexShare for 90 days (TSLAC)



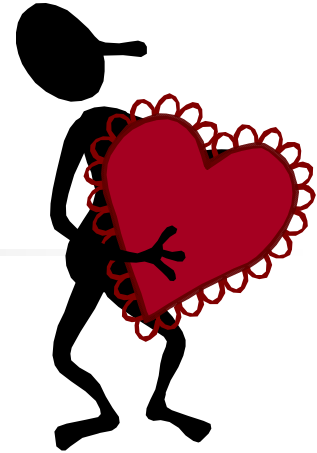
Start-up: Considerations & Panic Attacks



- Nov 1997-Dec 1998: CEDS
- Sep – Dec 1998: CEDS service deterioration; corporate changes; lack of communication; *downslide...*
- Dec 31, 1998: signed contract with Marquis Messengers to assume CEDS routes/responsibilities on Jan 1, 1999



Start-up: Comments, Kudos, Quotes...



- Nov 3, 1997 start-up comments:
 - "We anxiously awaited THE Day! Our courier arrived...it was like having our own Santa Claus in a CEDS uniform."
 - "TEExpress is a recipe for happiness!"
 - "I thought it was too good to be true"
 - "Whoever thought of this is really smart!"



Start-up: Comments, Kudos, Quotes...



- Mar 10, 1998 status report:
 - 99% of TExpress has been operating smoothly
 - Since start-up, dispersed approximately 60,000 labels
 - As of 3/9/98, there are 82 participating sites
- Oct 8, 1998 lament:
 - "... reported dismal compliance from TExpress participants in reporting program statistics."
- Feb 18, 1999:
 - "The Panic of February 1999 is over."



TAE/TExpress Pricing History

- 1997: \$1,850 5-day; \$1,400 2-day
- 1998: \$2,100
 - With TexShare subsidy of \$250: \$1,850
- 1999: \$2,400
- 2000, 2001: \$2,600
- 2002: \$2,700
- 2003, 2004: \$2,800
- 2005: \$2,950
- 2006: \$3,200
- 2007: \$3,350
 - With TexShare subsidy of \$900: \$2,450





TAE/TExpress Participation Levels

Libraries

- Nov 1997: 79
- Mar 1999: 95
- June 2001: 153
- June 2003: 230
- June 2005: 221
- July 2006: 216

Packages Delivered

- 1999: 289,618
- 2005: 672,450
- 2006: 735,831





TAE/TExpress Turnaround Time

- April-June 2005 Time Study
 - Average turnaround: 1.9 days
 - 44% of deliveries rec'd in 1 business day
 - 80% of deliveries rec'd in 2 business days
 - 94% of deliveries rec'd in 3 business days
- Study conducted during “very busy time” in the academic year





Recent Activity Report

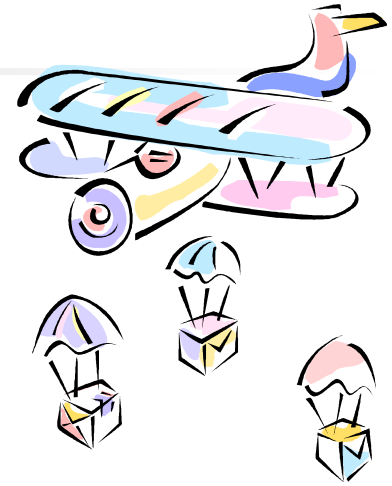
- March-May 2006
 - TExpress calls: 142
 - Internet messages: 62
 - Complaints/service issues: 11
 - Re-directed packages: 250
- Types of service problems:
 - Driver errors or delays; missing items





Variations on a Theme

- Special circumstances include:
 - Single site, multiple libraries
 - 203 Pick-up, delivery sites
 - 216 participating libraries
 - Single city sub-service
 - 4 sites, daily closed cycle, link out to TExpress
 - Interfaces with separate systems





Lessons Learned



- Relationship-based program
 - Informality, trust, flexibility and mutual goals benefit all
 - Participants need and in fact appreciate heel-nipping 😊
 - Peer-based decisions and requirements
- Low-tech, high-touch component of resource sharing
- Delicate balance between cost & service requirements

Communications/Contact Info about TAE/TExpress



- Support: 1-800-843-8482 x2863
- Support: tae@amigos.org
- Discussion:
 - TexShare Users List required for participation in TExpress:
 - texshare-courier@lists.tsl.state.tx.us
 - texshare-users@lists.tsl.state.tx.us
 - syscon-tx@lists.tsl.state.tx.us
- Info: <http://amigos.org/tae/gazette>
- Info: Amigos program contact lists (direct e-mails)

