

# GSA Acquisition Workforce Forum

--Informing the GSA acquisition workforce on the latest acquisition news and events!

## CAO CORNER--



*Ed. Note--Michael Berkholtz is guest columnist for the CAO this edition*

### Update on GSA's Strategic Sourcing Initiative by Michael Berkholtz

As discussed in the Fall 2006 Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) Corner article, GSA is actively engaged in the governmentwide strategic sourcing initiative. With the federal government spending over \$400 billion annually, it is the responsibility of every member of the acquisition workforce – from the CAO to the project manager – to ensure each dollar spent returns value to the American taxpayer.

The May 2005 Office of Management and Budget memorandum initiating a governmentwide effort to identify strategic business solutions leveraging the buying power of the federal government continues to be a top priority for the acquisition community. Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Administrator Paul Dennet reinforced this in a May 22, 2007 memorandum highlighting successes in the federal government and encouraging agencies to participate in strategic sourcing solutions at a federal level.


## EDITION SIXTEEN SUMMER 2007

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"For in the final analysis, our most basic common link, is that we all inhabit this small planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children's future, and we are all mortal."

John F. Kennedy June 10, 1963



GSA has made progress in building an internal strategic sourcing program. Initially, GSA created an internal strategic sourcing council and developed a project plan to clarify internal efforts. In September 2006, we contracted for project management support to help formalize a governance structure and develop strategies to move the initiative forward. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, the Office of the CAO conducted stakeholder interviews to better understand the interaction between the different organizations within GSA regarding internal procurement operations and goals. We are working to align the strategic sourcing initiative to assist these organizations in meeting those goals. By leading the way in strategic sourcing for its own internal operations, GSA sets an example, building credibility for its service offerings and expanding its agency customer base.


We are also seeking to build off our current successes. Such initiatives as GSA's Public Building Service's National Broker Contract and Chief Information Officer's IT Hardware blanket purchase awards (BPAs) are GSA homegrown strategic purchases which have saved GSA and the taxpayer money. GSA has also met with initial success in awarding contracts for copiers and acquisition training through the use of a top-down approach to fulfill the requirements. In this case, direction came from top management to meet the requirement through strategic sourcing.

Savings generated by these initiatives have been significant. GSA, through the Federal Acquisition Institute, strategically sourced a contract for a series of four training courses saving \$1,259,662 or approximately 43% for the life of the contract. GSA's BPA for IT Hardware has saved the agency an estimated \$9 million on the purchase of servers, monitors, desktops and laptop computers from September 2002 to September 2006. Since April 1, 2005, the use of the National

Broker Contract (NBC) has generated \$7,348,925 in savings in the form of rent credits (the portion of commissions returned to GSA as shell rent credits and then passed on to our tenants). There are additional savings which are attributed to transactions negotiated through the NBC where the rental rates are below GSA's benchmarks relative to the market. These savings are estimated at \$4.9M for FY 06 and the first quarter of FY 07.

The five commodities GSA identified for strategic sourcing in FY 2006 were the same as the five commodities identified for the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI)—wireless services, domestic delivery services, office supplies, printers, and copiers. GSA has formed commodity teams around these items and is actively participating in the FSSI commodity teams to the maximum extent possible. Successes with these commodities include:

- An award to Canon USA, Inc. for 5 years of service. The winning bid was approximately 28 percent under the GSA schedule price for copiers. Offices should be transitioning to this vehicle as current contracts expire.
- Full GSA participation in the FSSI process for overnight delivery services, supplying members for the working group, evaluation team and a contracting officer. Currently, the governmentwide award has over \$74 million in orders from 37 agencies including GSA, which will save the government an estimated \$10 million annually. Additionally, detailed shipping information is being provided to each agency using the FSSI agreement to improve our domestic delivery processes.
- The development of a commodity team



across several GSA organizations to create a strategic plan for sourcing wireless services. The Commodity Team identified \$800,000 in savings during 2006 through GSA-wide efforts to better manage the use of wireless services procured through Verizon, our mandatory service provider. GSA recently moved to a pooled plan for all Verizon users which will eliminate overage charges, simplify ordering of services and result in estimated savings of approximately \$500,000 in FY 07 alone.

While GSA made significant strides during FY 2006, we are looking to speed up implementation of the program to keep GSA at the forefront of this critical governmentwide initiative. Some of the key objectives/activities for the current year include:

- Completing an agency-wide strategic sourcing blueprint that will implement a clear, repeatable strategic sourcing and program management process for managing the GSA's total spend.
- Further developing and institutionalizing the governance structure to gain full participation from all of GSA's national and regional organizations.
- Developing metrics for use in strategic sourcing decisions. This will include establishing baseline data and information for currently identified commodities and services as well as exploring a mechanism to automate collection and analysis of data and information for future commodities and services.
- Completing sourcing strategies for the commodities identified in FY 2006 and actively participate in the FSSI working groups on those initiatives.

- Developing a communications platform to ensure a clear and consistent message reaches all of our offices.
- Identifying and launching additional commodity teams to be determined by several factors including analysis of GSA spend data, federal sourcing initiatives, service and regional suggestions, and senior management direction.

As other agencies institutionalize strategic sourcing processes and initiatives, GSA's success on internal strategic sourcing initiatives will put the organization in a strong position to assist those agencies in achieving their goals. Strategic sourcing is changing the way agencies do business and is resulting in improvements in the acquisition process. With active participation from its employees, GSA will continue to be a leader in the federal acquisition community.

*Michael Berkholtz is currently a Senior Advisor to the Chief Acquisition Officer at GSA and has managed the GSA internal strategic sourcing initiative since April 2006. Mr. Berkholtz has also served in staff positions at the Office of Management and Budget, the Small Business Administration and the U.S. Senate. He can be reached at [michael.berkholtz@gsa.gov](mailto:michael.berkholtz@gsa.gov) or 202-395-3301.*

### **From the Desk of the Editor** by Judy Steele



This edition of the "Forum" is all about good news—successful conferences, award winning employees, and how GSA is leading the government in going green. We hope you find these articles, and the other features in this month's "Forum" to be interesting and helpful. Please forward any comments, suggestions and articles for the newsletter to the Editor, Judy Steele, at [judy.steele@gsa.gov](mailto:judy.steele@gsa.gov).



## ACQUISITION UPDATE



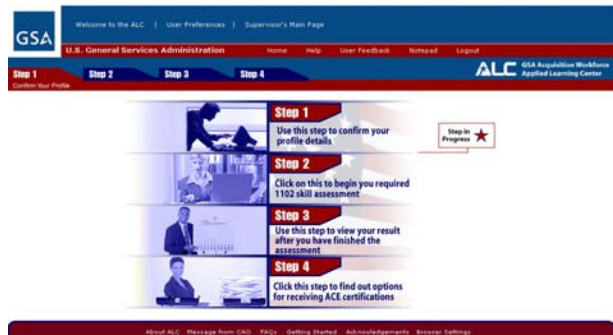
### SPOTLIGHT ON FFATA

On September 26, 2006, the President signed the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) to reduce “wasteful and unnecessary spending” by requiring that OMB establish a free, public, online database containing full disclosure of all federal award information. The bill’s co-sponsors were Senator Tom Coburn (R-Oklahoma) and Senator Barack Obama (D-Illinois). FFATA defines “federal award” to include “grants, subgrants, loans, awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of financial assistance” as well as “contracts, subcontracts, purchase orders, task orders, and delivery orders.”

By January 1, 2008, FFATA requires reporting on entities that are awarded funds directly from the federal government. FFATA will include data sourced from the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS), the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS), and Grants.gov. The passage of this Act once again emphasizes the need to ensure that all data entered into FPDS and all the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) systems is correct.

A proposed rule change to the FAR to allow for the FFATA pilot program was published in the March 21, 2007 Federal Register. In order to implement Section 2(d) of FFATA, the proposed rule will change FAR Part 4, with associated clauses in FAR Part 52, which addresses reporting subcontract awards. Exempted from the pilot are solicitations and contracts for commercial items issued under FAR Part 12 and classified solicitations and contracts. The pilot program is scheduled to


begin July 1, 2007. This rule applies to contracts of \$500,000,000 or greater and requires the awardees to report all first tier subcontract awards exceeding \$1 million to the FFATA database at [www.federalspending.gov](http://www.federalspending.gov). For more information, contact Earl Warrington at [earl.warrington@gsa.gov](mailto:earl.warrington@gsa.gov) or 703-872-8609.



### ALC Assessments Revised

In September 2004, GSA launched a competency assessment tool designed for the 1102 acquisition workforce called the Applied Learning Center (ALC). Over the past several months, the ALC program office has engaged in a comprehensive Independent Verification & Validation (I V & V) of the ALC site and the contents of the assessment tools. The I V & V was conducted by a team of individuals from GSA, the Defense Acquisition University, the Federal Acquisition Institute, and private industry acquisition experts. The team was led by a consultant affiliated with the American Council on Education (ACE) and a psychometrician, an expert in question development design and validation.

In order to more fully meet the needs of GSA's 1102 workforce through the ALC, an initial decision was made to combine the three assessments of the old ALC into a single assessment. This single assessment will be used to measure skills gaps and, in the future, will serve as a means to earn college credit recommendations through the ACE Credit by Examination program. The assessment will contain multiple choice and real-life scenarios



addressing 17 competency areas identified through a Delphi Process as necessary for the success of the 1102 workforce. The results of the ALC will be used to provide targeted training from the individual level to the Service level.

The redesigned and revised ALC will be released to all GSA 1102 personnel on October 15, 2007, and close on November 16, 2007. Additional communications will be made prior to the release date so as to ensure that all GSA 1102 personnel complete the revised ALC during this time period. After the release of the revised ALC, the ALC program office will announce its plan for using the assessment results to earn college credit recommendations through the ACE program. Designation from ACE will allow assessment takers enrolled in a degree or certificate program to apply for credit at colleges and universities across the country, using the results of their ALC assessment. It is anticipated that the ACE review process will be concluded during the first quarter of calendar year 2008. If you have any questions, please contact Teresa Elbin, ALC Program Manager at [teresa.elbin@gsa.gov](mailto:teresa.elbin@gsa.gov) or 202-208-4033.



## Update on the Acquisition Planning Wizard (APW)


Exciting things have been happening with GSA's automated tool for creating and storing acquisition plans, the Acquisition Planning Wizard (APW). Over the last month the contractor for the APW, Development Infostructure (DevIS), along with the APW procurement analyst from OCAO, Michael O. Jackson, have been conducting pilot tests to determine if the Wizard can be accessed externally. The tests were a success with not only the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) being able to access the Wizard, but also the

Chief Procurement and Contract Management Officer, Office of Administration, the Executive Office of the President.

On April 6, 2007, Mr. Jackson and members of the DevIS team traveled to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, to provide a demonstration of the APW. The team gave a detailed demonstration of the APW, including the genesis of the APW and a hands-on demonstration with a simulated acquisition as it worked its way through the various review and approval gates. The class was very interested in the capabilities demonstrated by the system – not only in terms of accessing it for future GSA actions, but also the potential for tailoring this kind of tool for service-specific use. DAU noted that they could see the utility of APW, especially for the variety of geographically dispersed customers Department of Defense has and because it could easily be used by less experienced acquisition professionals when preparing acquisition planning documents.

DevIS and OCAO also took APW “on the road” and showcased the abilities of APW at the 2007 GSA EXPO in Orlando, Florida. The APW was well received at EXPO and agencies inquired how they could get full access to the system. GSA assured them that discussions regarding making the tool available outside of GSA were already underway and we would make APW a solution for their acquisition planning needs.

Current APW users should expect to see the rollout of APW Version 4.0, which enhances the user experience, in the near future. Version 4.0 tackles questions we hear routinely on Help Desk calls such as “What is the status of my plan?” or “What is holding up my plan?” A new plan dashboard will replace the participant role-based tabs in the previous versions, allowing users to immediately see what information is missing in their plan or which plan participants are holding up the process.



For more information on the Acquisition Planning Wizard, contact Michael O. Jackson at [michaelo.jackson@gsa.gov](mailto:michaelo.jackson@gsa.gov) or 202-208-4949.

### **A New MAS Contractor Report Card**

Being a successful contractor means more than just getting sales. Success also means complying with contract Terms and Conditions and effectively managing contractual requirements. Since 2002, GSA has been using a Contractor Report Card as part of the Multiple Award Schedule's (MAS) Contractor Assessment Initiative to reflect how well contractors do just that. GSA will release a new and improved version of the Report Card in summer 2007. Like the original, the new Report Card is designed to provide contractors with helpful feedback. It deals strictly with performance against MAS Terms and Conditions and does not in any way evaluate performance on individual task or delivery orders. The Report Card is visible only to GSA and to the individual contractor. Even though the purpose of the Report Card remains the same, there are some significant changes to point out. Some changes were made as a result of industry feedback, while others were made internally by GSA. In the new version, we're adding some new areas of evaluation:

- System or process to monitor the "basis of award" pricing
- Meeting the minimum sales criteria (\$25,000 over the first two years, then \$25,000 annually)
- Including prompt payment terms on invoices
- Use of electronic contracting tools

Additionally, we're changing the way we calculate the contractor's overall rating. The current calculation is simple, but not very useful. A score of 27 out of 27 items results in an "outstanding" rating; a score of 22 to 26 results in a "successful;" and fewer than 22 results in an "unsuccessful." In the new Report

Card, items are classified as critical, mandatory but not critical, and above and beyond. Nine areas were determined to be critical, so failure in any of those areas causes an overall rating of "serious concerns exist." If all critical items are met, ratings will range from "very good" to "satisfactory" to "marginal" depending on performance on the other eleven mandatory but not critical items. Finally, six items are classified as going above and beyond the contractual requirements. Contractors who receive a "very good" based on the above, and achieve five of six of these extra credit areas, get an "exceptional" overall rating.

The MAS Report Card is an important tool to help contractors successfully manage their contracts. Receiving a less than perfect rating does not automatically translate into contract cancellation or denial of a contract's option period. The focus is on working towards long-term solutions for any identified problem areas. For more information, contact Walter Eckbreth at [walter.eckbreth@gsa.gov](mailto:walter.eckbreth@gsa.gov) or 703-605-5717.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



### **Report from NCMA's World Congress 2007**

This year's National Contract Management Association (NCMA) World Congress, held April 22 through April 25 in Dallas, Texas, was a "big success in the Big D." Just like this diverse city, the 2007 World Congress offered a variety of possibilities and opportunities to enhance your professional development, network with your peers, and have some fun...Texas style!

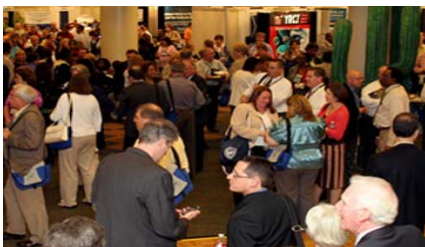




*Mr. Wynne receives award from Lenn Vincent, NCMA President*

During his presentation at World Congress 2007, keynote speaker, Michael W. Wynne, secretary of the U.S. Air Force, emphasized the vital role of the contracts professional in putting together business deals, supporting the defense of the nation, and building win-win solutions for the government and industry. Following his presentation, NCMA proudly presented Wynne with the Herbert Roback Memorial Award in recognition of his significant contributions. Wynne knows the myriad details of the acquisition business and has published articles on cost estimating, engineering, and contracting in numerous professional journals. An NCMA Fellow, Wynne has been a consistent supporter of the acquisition workforce and NCMA. He upholds the standards of the profession and ensures trust, confidence, and integrity throughout the acquisition process.

NCMA would like to thank all those who attended, spoke, and exhibited at this event. This program brought together more than 2,000 participants gathered for the three-day conference to network, discuss the impact of contract management processes, and share best practices for increasing the efficiency of contract departments. Please join us for World Congress 2008, in Cincinnati, Ohio, April 13-16, 2008. For more information, go to [www.ncmahq.org/meetings/WC07/](http://www.ncmahq.org/meetings/WC07/).



*A fife and drum corps ushers attendees to dinner*

## **At 46, IRMCO is Going Strong!**

GSA hosted the 46th annual Interagency Resources Management Conference (IRMCO) at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, Virginia, April 29 to May 1. IRMCO 2007, themed “CXO’s: Bringing Innovation and Delivering Results,” gave the hundreds of attendees two days of in-depth, hard-hitting, incisive and engaging exploration of the most significant and timely issues facing the government management communities.

IRMCO 2007 saw the introduction of the Executive Roundtable discussions moderated by OMB and agency executives. These discussions focused on how our nation will be better off in 2010 because of what we are doing now to improve the management of finance, acquisition, information technology, and human resources. IRMCO 2007 also included keynote speakers who spoke to an unprecedented range and depth of subject matter affecting government executives. Speakers included:

- Rebecca Cooper, National Correspondent, ABC7/WJLA-TV



*An IRMCO break-out session*

- Vice Admiral Harvey Johnson, Deputy Administrator and Chief Operating Officer, FEMA
- Rick Amme, Amme and Associates, Communications in a Crisis
- Shantanu Narayen, President and Chief Operating Officer, Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Sallyanne Harper, Chief Administrative Officer and CFO, GAO
- Robert M. Weede, Assistant Corporate Controller, Microsoft Corporation

Provocative and interactive panel discussions rounded out the conference content by looking at topics such as private-sector to public-sector transitions, managing the multi-sector workforce, collaborations within the Department of Housing and Urban Development executive management team, and “Achieving Cutting Edge Innovation in Industry.” For more information on IRMCO, contact John Andre at [john.andre@gsa.gov](mailto:john.andre@gsa.gov) or 202-501-9069.



### **GSA EXPO 2007 a Big Success!**

GSA’s 13<sup>th</sup> EXPO, hosted by the Southeast Sunbelt Region in Orlando, Florida, May 15 through 17, was a record-breaking success. Over 10,400 registered participants from 375 federal entities and approximately 800 commercial vendors attended this event. GSA’s customers learned what services GSA has to offer and exchanged ideas with industry partners on how to make the procurement process more efficient, user friendly, and cost effective. Attendees earned over 15,000 hours of training credit towards their annual continuing education requirements through 255 training sessions—the largest number of training sessions ever.



This year’s event also offered the greatest variety of companies with which to do comparative shopping and networking, with every small business category represented to help agencies meet their small business goals. Our industry partners reported over 350 business leads totaling over \$23 million, an average of \$61,000 per exhibiting company.

Several FAS Acquisition Centers hosted forums with industry partners, including the National Furniture Center, the Information Technology Center, the Services Acquisition and Management Services Center, the Center for Facilities Maintenance and Hardware, and the Greater Southwest Acquisition Center. The forums offered an opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics including cooperative purchasing, the Disaster Recovery Program, contractor teaming arrangements and subcontracting, the Trade Agreements Act, and multiple award schedule modification procedures.

EXPO also included training sessions on the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE). “*Effective and Efficient Utilization of the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)*” highlighted the many uses of the information in acquisition management including an emphasis on transparency and visibility, ensuring data accuracy and accountability in reporting, and the impact this information has on each agency’s goals. This course provided attendees with detailed knowledge about the extensive resources in FPDS and up to the minute tips on using many of its features to help manage and ensure accurate reporting of each agency’s performance. A standard IAE overview, providing a high level review of all the IAE systems, was also provided in another session.



The key players in this year's EXPO—the new FAS and PBS—worked hand-in-hand to show how GSA and its various programs will become even more effective and efficient in the years ahead. For more information, contact Harry Butler at [harry.butler@gsa.gov](mailto:harry.butler@gsa.gov) or 703-605-5717.



*Scott Armeý hosted Acquisition Day*

### **Greater Southwest Region Conducts 4th Annual Acquisition Day**

Greater Southwest Regional Administrator Scott Armeý hosted the Region's 4th annual Acquisition Day on April 17. More than 350 regional and field employees attended this all-day event in Fort Worth, Texas. Opening presentations were given by the Region's senior leaders including Armeý, Deputy Regional Administrator George Prochaska, Assistant Regional Administrator for FAS Tyree Varnado, and Deputy Assistant Regional Administrator for PBS Kenny Smith. Featured speakers included Chief Acquisition Officer Molly Wilkinson; Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer/Senior Procurement Advisor David Drabkin; FAS Assistant Commissioner for Acquisition Management, Mike Sade; and FAS Assistant Commissioner for Assisted Acquisition Services, Mary Davie. Additionally, Rachel Lerum, Senior Program Advisor, Acquisition Workforce Division, OCAO, spoke about the revised Applied Learning Center and Ellis Osiname, OCAO Program Analyst, briefed the attendees on the Federal Acquisition Certification Program. Linda Neilson, Department of Defense Deputy Director for Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, was the guest speaker.

For the first time at this event, acquisition awards were presented for the Region's 2007 Acquisition Professionals of the Year, Mark Ready of FAS and Dianna Henderson of PBS. 2007 Rising Stars were presented to Haley Naegele of FAS and Jason McCall of PBS. The 2007 Acquisition Team Award was presented to the Schedules 56 and 84 Ancillary Services Pricing Definitization Team. For more information, contact Jill LaDuca at [jill.laduca@gsa.gov](mailto:jill.laduca@gsa.gov) or 817-978-3240.



*Dinora Gonzalez and Jean Turner present Award to Rebecca Vanover*

### **Southeast Sunbelt Employee Named Native American Business "Advocate of the Year"**

Southeast Sunbelt Region's Rebecca Vanover, Small Business Development Specialist, was named "Advocate of the Year" by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development at the 2007 Native American Business Leaders Awards Luncheon held April 19, 2007. Rebecca assists Native American and Alaska Native owned small businesses in understanding about contracting, procurement, and marketing with the federal government. Her office networks extensively with Native American business advocacy organizations to develop partnerships in outreach events and other business development activities. In addition, she coordinates business development and counseling programs and provides information and resource material on marketing to GSA and the federal government, in general. She develops, directs, and participates in numerous regional and national outreach programs. She also is a speaker at conferences and seminars on

small business issues and works to expand activities designed to increase access to procurement opportunities for the small, minority, women-owned, veteran-owned businesses and businesses located in HubZones. For more information, contact Gary Mote at [gary.mote@gsa.gov](mailto:gary.mote@gsa.gov) or 404-331-2774.



### **Southeast Sunbelt Region's Carson Recognized as Outstanding Professional**

On May 10, Southeast Sunbelt Region's Kristine Carson represented PBS at the Annual Federal Executive Board's (FEB) Employee of the Year Award Ceremony. Carson's nomination for the Outstanding Professional Award was submitted by her supervisor and confirmed by the Regional Administrator. Over the past two years, in preparation for the disposal of the Middle River Station in Baltimore County, Maryland, Carson has utilized her professional abilities in negotiating and developing a plan of action with internal and external stakeholders. She facilitated numerous meetings to ensure that Baltimore County and local community groups were involved in the disposition of a 1.9 million-square-foot, two-story warehouse with 320 parking spaces on 50.35 acres. These meetings afforded the County and the community an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns on the eventual sale of the property. Carson also overcame potential concerns regarding the properties historical significance by bringing together an internal team which included historians, architects, engineers, attorneys and environmental experts. Through her guidance and perseverance an agreement with the Trust

was finalized adding \$37.5 million to the Federal Building Fund. For more information, contact Gary Mote at [gary.mote@gsa.gov](mailto:gary.mote@gsa.gov) or 404-331-2774.



*Attendees at one of the Networking Business Breakfasts*

### **SMALL BUSINESS CORNER**

#### **Heartland Networking Business Breakfast Increases Awareness of Contracting Opportunities**

On May 1 over 130 small business owners and representatives from local, state, and federal agencies attended the Heartland Region's Networking Business Breakfast. Attendees mingled, enjoyed breakfast, received two-minute presentations from 10 small business owners, and explored business opportunities. After breakfast, over 55 business owners stayed to listen to presentations about business resources, contracting procedures, tools and requirements, and federal contracting opportunities. Representatives from GSA, the Missouri and Kansas Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made procurement presentations. The Networking Business Breakfast, held on the first Tuesday of each month, is hosted by the Heartland Region's Office of Business and Support Services and co-sponsored by over 20 local Chambers of Commerce and business organizations, as well as local, state, and federal agencies. For more information, contact Mike Brincks at [michael.brincks@gsa.gov](mailto:michael.brincks@gsa.gov) or 816-926-7217.



## GREEN PROCUREMENT

*At the May 23 NCR Customer Connections Conference, Deputy Administrator David Bibb discussed GSA's role in the greening of the federal government. Helping federal agencies meet their environmental goals is one of GSA's top priorities. GSA offers its customers environmentally responsible products and services; leadership in energy efficient, green buildings; and GSA's governmentwide telework initiative which includes GSA's 14 telework centers. GSA helps client agencies meet their environmental obligations by providing them with responsible choices including the construction and leasing of energy efficient, sustainable-designed buildings; the procurement of renewable utility services; a selection of the latest alternative fuel vehicles; a wide range of environmentally preferable office and other projects, and environmentally friendly telework and other alternative workplace arrangements which result in the usage of less fuel and the reduction of emissions into the environment. In this spirit, the "Forum" continues to feature articles spotlighting green procurement activities.*

### **Energy Incentives and Procurement Programs Workshop Held in New York**

Over 225 energy procurement and facilities professionals learned how to be green while saving green at an Energy Incentives and Procurement Programs workshop held at the historic Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House in New York City on March 27. The Northeast and Caribbean Region, along with GSA's Office of Citizen Services and Com-

munications, teamed up with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU), Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) and the Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program to coordinate the day-long program. Participants at the event learned how to obtain financial incentives from NYSERDA, NJBPU, and LIPA to implement energy projects in their facilities by selecting the most appropriate avenue for funding and implementation. Federal and state experts discussed financial assistance opportunities to implement energy efficiency projects, load management, distributed generation, and much more. For additional information, visit the Northeast and Caribbean Region's InSite at <http://r2insite.gsa.gov> or contact Brian Magden at [brian.magden@gsa.gov](mailto:brian.magden@gsa.gov) or 212-264-0591.



*Alexander Hamilton Custom House*



### **Northeast and Caribbean Region Co-Sponsors Sustainable Design Seminar**

Over 170 energy experts, building owners, engineers, and architects learned that Sustainable Design for Buildings is fast becoming the norm in building design at the GSA/ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers)





Sustainable Design for Buildings workshop held at the Alexander Hamilton Custom House in New York on April 11. The Northeast and Caribbean Region, along with the U.S. Green Building Council, International Facility Management Association, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the New York Chapter of ASHRAE, and the New York Chapter Association of Energy Engineers, sponsored this one-day workshop. Speakers, including ASHRAE’s president, Terry Townsend, and the Northeast and Caribbean Region’s energy coordinator, Brian Magden, spoke about LEED certification, implementation sustainability in existing buildings, public sector initiatives toward sustainability and energy efficiency and alternative energy sources. The all day seminar also qualified for seven professional development hours and continuing education credits for engineers and architects. For more information, contact Brian Magden at [brian.magden@gsa.gov](mailto:brian.magden@gsa.gov) or 212-264-0591.

Protection Agency Regional Administrator Robert Varne, and Waltham Mayor Jeannette McCarthy. The Massachusetts Technical Collaborative funded \$50,000 of the \$5,000,000 contract which was awarded to Solar Integrated Technologies on August 4, 2006. The completed system consists of 252 double 10’ x 20’ solar roof panels and a kiosk, located in the lobby, through which guests may take a virtual tour of the roof and track building energy savings. GSA estimates the system will produce roughly 45% of the building’s total energy requirements – about 430,000 kW-h annually. GSA project team members included Contracting Officer Kathryn Thomas, Regional Energy Coordinator Roman Piaskoski, Energy Center of Expertise Director Mark Ewing, Energy Management Specialist Karen Curran, Project Manager and COTR Sean Orgel, Electrical Engineer Donald Fuccillo, Mechanical Engineer Sarah Wenninger, Civil Engineer Richard Jellyman, Property Manager Eric Keurulainen, and Construction Inspector John Buckley. For more information, contact Cathy Menzies at [cathy.menzies@gsa.gov](mailto:cathy.menzies@gsa.gov) or 617- 565-6551.



**New England Celebrates Completion of Second Regional Solar Roof Project**

On April 26, the New England Region, along with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the newly installed 377 kW – DC Building Integrated Photovoltaic Roof at the Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center, Waltham, Massachusetts. This is the second solar roof project completed in the Region. Speakers included Regional Administrator Dennis Smith, Assistant Regional Administrator Glenn Rotondo, NARA Regional Administrator Diane LeBlanc, Environmental




*Shelagh Bocoum and Lance Davis staff PBS booth at AIA*

**Sustainable Design is Theme at AIA Convention**

The PBS Sustainable Design Program presented GSA’s “GSA” (Green Solicitation for Architects) at this year’s American Institute of Architects convention in San Antonio, Texas, May 4 through 6. Many architects were eager to learn about changes to standard design service contracts, requests for proposals, and solicitations for offers with the inclusion of Executive Order 13423, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and GSA’s commitment to sustain-





able design principles. GSA's booth on the convention floor was well received. Many thanks go out to the GSA volunteers from around the country who answered architect and vendor questions. The Sustainable Design Program Office also gave a presentation on working with GSA at the Federal Learning Center on the convention floor. For more information, contact Lance Davis at [lance.davis@gsa.gov](mailto:lance.davis@gsa.gov) or 202-208-2038.

## IAE CORNER

### Cleaning Up FPDS Data Top Priority



Paul Denett, the Administrator of OFPP, has announced that his top priority is timely, accurate, and complete data being input to the Federal Procurement Data Systems (FPDS) database. In a memo dated March 9, 2007 he made all the Chief Acquisition Officers (CAOs) responsible for the accuracy of this data. Molly Wilkinson, GSA's CAO, has stated that FPDS data accuracy is her top priority as well.

FPDS is the chief repository for acquisition information. It is critical that the data entered into FPDS is totally accurate and dependable because it is used as the authoritative data source. It provides:

- an accurate accounting of how much is spent and how much is collected for agency managers
- timely and useful procurement data for federal agencies and contractors to make business decisions
- a reliable source of spending data
- public access to how the government spends taxpayers' money to ensure transparency

Agency decisions on organization, staffing, and training are dependent on correct procurement data as well. By ensuring FPDS data is accurate, CAOs will also be better able to meet the requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, which requires a public website listing the government's contracting and grant information to be operational by January 1, 2008.

Mr. Denett hopes by making the CAOs accountable that steps will be taken to fix this problem "once and for all." He is requiring that CAOs validate and sign off on the data that their agencies submit to FPDS. To do this, CAOs must establish a routine verification process, assigning clear areas of responsibility for verifying the data, and annually certify the data's accuracy to GSA. Training should be offered when necessary. An interim FAR case, 2004-038 "Revisions to FPDS Reporting," which clarifies FPDS roles and responsibilities, has been sent to the DAR Council for review. It is hoped that Mr. Denett's memo will hit home the seriousness of the inaccurate data input and ensure that contracting offices take decisive steps to resolve this ongoing problem. For more information, contact Lisa Cliff at [integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov](mailto:integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov).



## GSA AND ABILITYONE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

*The GSA/AbilityOne Strategic Alliance Vision is to establish a strategic alliance for long-term mutual benefit that delivers improved processes for contracting, recognizes AbilityOne as the vendor of choice, and values market-pricing, job creation, ease of process, flexibility, quality, and industry innovation.*



## GSA/AbilityOne Strategic Alliance

Update by Karone Blondin

In November 2002, a historic and notable event occurred...the GSA/Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Strategic Alliance was executed by top officials at GSA/PBS and NISH, representing the nonprofit agencies (NPAs) serving people with a range of severe disabilities, and the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (the Committee). The Alliance challenges the organizations to think more broadly in pursuit of the goal of employing people with severe disabilities, provide best value to the customer; provide a positive return on investment for U.S. taxpayers, and use business operating procedures and practices. The Alliance calls for these organizations to establish structured referral, market research, pricing, communication, and contract management processes.

Today the Alliance is approaching its fifth year and its partners have embraced a spirit of interdependence and collaboration as a way of conducting business. This results in improved relationships that cause the partners to welcome change and experience success.

**Name Change.** In 2006, a significant change occurred at the Committee that changes the name and the identity of the Program that serves people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The Committee changed the umbrella name for the Program it administers from JWOD to AbilityOne. The Committee gave several reasons for the name change including:

- increasing the level of awareness, understanding and preference among key audiences
- linking all of the participating organizations and employment mission

- better communicating the purpose and value of the Program
- conveying employment mission and honoring the disabled workforce

A gradual transition to the new name will take place over the next 12 months to give customers and vendors an opportunity to become familiar with the name change. Updates on the new name, including graphics and standards, will be posted on the Committee's website at [www.abilityone.gov](http://www.abilityone.gov).

**Successes.** Below are some of the notable Strategic Alliance successes which demonstrate that the commitment to the Alliance continues to flourish:

- The Alliance Steering Committee created a standard operating procedures (SOP) manual to assist in the field with day-to-day operations. The manual is a living document and continues to be updated and improved regularly.
- When the Alliance was rolled out at the eleven GSA regions, each region and their respective NISH counterparts created customized processes to implement the vision. This approach allowed each region to implement a flexible plan that fit its particular needs and challenges.
- In fiscal year (FY) 2004, over 135 full time equivalents (FTE) representing people with severe disabilities were added to the AbilityOne Program—the greatest number since the signing of the Alliance. Combining FY 2005 and FY 2006, 97 FTE were added to the AbilityOne Program. This demonstrates that GSA continues to support the program by creating jobs for people with severe disabilities.



- During the development of the Strategic Alliance, NISH agreed to develop an NPA Certification Program to ensure that its customers received quality service and the NPAs maintained a program of continued improvement. The goal to certify approximately 180 NPAs delivering service to GSA/PBS is well underway. To date over 70 NPAs are certified, and it is expected that the remaining NPAs will receive certification by the end of calendar year 2007.
- During the summer of 2006, in keeping with one of the Alliance's mottos—*Communication is Key and Follow-up is Necessary*—the national GSA and NISH Alliance Managers returned to each GSA region to brief GSA, NISH and NPA staff who may not be familiar with the Alliance. The briefings gave people a chance to discuss issues and challenges that they face with a focus on how the Alliance can assist them.
- Finally, routine meetings are held nationally and regionally between GSA, NISH and the NPAs to exchange information and share ideas. Comments from these venues are used to update and enhance the SOP manual. An additional product of the meetings is enriched relationships.

The GSA/AbilityOne Strategic Alliance partners continue to work diligently and passionately towards ensuring that people with severe disabilities have the option to join the workforce. The AbilityOne Program embraces the idea of inclusion and the Alliance supports this ideal. We all agree that a strong America is a working America. For more information, visit the PBS AbilityOne website at <http://insite.pbs.gsa.gov/AbilityOne/> or contact Karone Blondin at [karone.blondin@gsa.gov](mailto:karone.blondin@gsa.gov) or 202-501-3518.



## DID YOU KNOW?

OFPP has issued a guide designed to help agencies prepare the acquisition workforce for emergencies. The guide describes strategies for effective response planning and provides a list of acquisition reminders when contracting during emergencies. The guide also discusses flexibilities that acquisition personnel deployed to an emergency situation may use to facilitate timely procurements. This guide is intended to supplement, not supplant, agency-specific guidance, and should be read in conjunction with FAR Part 18 on emergency acquisitions. The guide will be maintained electronically and updated, as needed, on the OFPP Web site, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/>.



## CHECK IT OUT!

“Check It Out!” highlights upcoming conferences and events of interest to the GSA acquisition community. If you’d like to have your conference or event listed in this column, please send an e-mail to the Editor, [judy.steele@gsa.gov](mailto:judy.steele@gsa.gov) with the pertinent information including a point of contact.

### **Aerospace and Defense Contract Management Conference**

“Rules, Risks, and Rewards-The Changing Outlook for Aerospace & Defense Contracting”

July 26-27, 2007

Hyatt Regency Orange County  
Garden Grove, CA

[www.ncmahq.org](http://www.ncmahq.org)



**Government Contract Management  
Conference**

November 8-9, 2007  
Bethesda North Marriott Hotel &  
Conference Center  
Bethesda, MD  
[www.ncmahq.org](http://www.ncmahq.org)

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We thank our guest authors for their contributions to this newsletter. Guest authors express their own views, which are provided for the information of our newsletter readers. We welcome any comments, suggestions, and articles. We also welcome any individually authored articles on acquisition issues that would be of interest to the GSA acquisition audience. Please contact the Editor, Judy Steele at [judy.steele@gsa.gov](mailto:judy.steele@gsa.gov) with comments or suggestions.

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