

# GSA Acquisition Workforce Forum

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

## CAO Corner




This is a challenging yet rewarding time to work in acquisition. Since the week before Katrina struck Florida and then moved onto the Gulf Coast, members of the GSA acquisition workforce have been anticipating needs, doing sourcing surveys, placing orders on behalf of various agencies and providing direct support first to planners and now to responders. We've purchased everything from food to body bags and done it in record time while complying with the myriad of rules applicable to the acquisition process. The next weeks and months are sure to be difficult—the tempo of the operations we are supporting all over the country for disaster recovery and planning for possible future events will not decrease. The impact of Hurricane Rita on the already devastated Gulf Coast will require even more support.

Many of you have volunteered to support GSA and other agencies during this crisis and I want you to know that I appreciate it and so do our leaders at all levels. Acquisition professionals rarely get the spotlight for the “magic” we work to meet requirements for our customers, but you should know that Mr. Perry, Mr. Bibb, Mr. Fielder and I are all extremely proud of what

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 From the Desk of the Editor
- 2 Hurricane Impact and Relief
- 2 Hurricane Katrina's Impact on IAE Systems
- 4 GSA Relief Efforts
- 5 Help Provided Through FirstGov.gov
- 5 Help Provided Through OPM
- 5 GSA Offers Free Telework Centers Through End of Year
- 6 OCAO Announces “Acquisition Alert!”
- 6 Alert for Emergency Procurement Authority
- 7 Disaster Recovery Business Workshop
- 7 OCAO Announces New APW Contact
- 7 Shelton Heads Federal Acquisition Service
- 8 PBS's Construction CO Council
- 9 Professional Development
- 9 Federal Government Procurement Conf.
- 10 FSS Contract Management 1<sup>st</sup> National Training Conference
- 10 Big APPLExpo
- 11 FTS's Ries Receives PBSA Award
- 11 FAI/DAU Hold Seminar on “Green IT”
- 12 Free Online EVM Training
- 12 Usability University Fall Semester
- 12 Getting It Right at GSA!
- 12 Heartland Associate Joins SARA Panel
- 13 Small Business Corner
- 13 DOE Small Business Conference
- 13 United Indian Development Association Small Business Conference
- 14 NCR Partners with Hoyer on Forum
- 14 “Opening Doors” Conference
- 15 OGP's Flaak Addresses GSA Small Business Advisory Committee
- 15 Green Procurement
- 15 Environmentally Preferable Purchasing
- 15 Buy Accessible Wizard Update
- 16 GSA/PBS/JWOD Strategic Alliance
- 17 October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- 18 Strategic Sourcing Part 2
- 19 Did You Know?
- 20 Check It Out!



has been done by you to date and are confident that you will continue to provide excellent support and service during the trying days to come. I am proud to lead you in this effort. Thank you!

A number of changes to rules and policies have been and will be implemented to accommodate the needs of our customers during this crisis. Some things will change daily and others will change over a longer period of time. We will keep you updated by sending information to your Heads of Contracting Activity, their deputies and the Acquisition Points of Contact in the regions and services. We will also publish all changes as they are made on our Acquisition Policy webpage.

If you need help or have a question please don't hesitate to e-mail or call us. For acquisition policy questions please contact Gerry Zaffos at 202-208-6091 and of course you may contact David Drabkin or me as well.

Again "Thank you!" for the tremendous effort you are making and thank you in advance for the great work you will do as we respond as a nation to the tragedy caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and remain vigilant against other threats.



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

The victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita are in our thoughts and prayers. In lieu of the usual "Desk of the Editor" information and comments we provide a special section on hurricane impact and relief.


We welcome any comments, suggestions and articles for the newsletter. The *Forum* is here to meet the needs of the GSA acquisition community and we can't do that without your input! 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) or 202-501-4994 with comments or suggestions.



**Hurricane Impact and Relief**

**Hurricane Katrina's Impact on IAE Systems** by Lisa Cliff

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, businesses in 122 counties or parishes were impacted and declared eligible for federal aid. Companies wanting to help the devastated area by offering their services in support of relief, clean-up, and restoration efforts have been contacting many government sources. Several systems and partners within GSA's IAE (Integrated Acquisition Environment) have noticed changes since August 29 and more are expected as the clean-up effort continues.



Typically, vendors seeking government contracts go to [www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov) to find procurement opportunities posted by the federal government. During this emergency, because of the immediacy of needs, FedBizOpps (FBO) has not been receiving the postings. Instead, the Help Desk has received many phone calls with offers of aid including insect repellent, food, clothing and trucks full of relief supplies ready to deploy. Some calls are from government contractors who want to donate goods and services. Others are from small businesses that have not previously done business with the federal government.

After seeing the 50% increase in calls, FBO posted “Emergency Contracting” information on their homepage and received over 20,000 hits in one week and the numbers are going up. They also included a link to information in their e-mail notifications that are sent out daily to 300-400,000 vendors so companies would know where to find information on helping with the relief effort. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has included a link to the FBO information under “Working with DHS-Business” on their homepage at [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

As the clean-up continues and procurement opportunities are again listed on FBO, contractors will undoubtedly need blueprints and restricted drawings of buildings, bridges and systems in order to respond to solicitations. Contracting officers will determine if there needs to be restricted access to the data based on its sensitivity. If the contracting officer determines that the technical data should be restricted; it is typically uploaded to [www.fedteds.gov](http://www.fedteds.gov). Then FBO provides hyperlinks to download the restricted data and vendors are given a password. FedTeDS is currently experiencing an increase in usage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Army Corps of Engineers have been

uploading a great deal of supporting technical documentation and diagrams related to utilities, buildings, construction, etc.


During normal times, contractors are required to be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database and as the government looks for vendors for contracting opportunities, they refer to CCR to identify suppliers that are certified by SBA as small disadvantaged, 8(a) or HUBZone businesses. However, in an emergency situation, heads of agencies have the authority to suspend this requirement if the goods and services are urgently needed. Even if this requirement is waived temporarily, contracting officers must still make sure that vendors are registered later. Registration must be in place before the contract action is reported to the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS-NG). Since registration takes effect in less than 12 hours, there is seldom a need to waive this requirement. If a contractor is offering their services toward the relief effort and is not already registered they should go to [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) immediately to register.



*Foto by Kyle Neime, U.S. Coast Guard*

Vendors need a Dun and Bradstreet number (D-U-N-S) to do business with the government. The number is obtained by calling 866-705-5711 or by registering at <https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions/government/ccrreg>. Since Katrina, Dun and





Bradstreet (D&B) has experienced a significant increase in call volumes and 1 in every 5 calls is related to Katrina contracting. There is a significant change in the types of D-U-N-S numbers requested. The majority of requests have been in construction, mobile homes, evacuation/drainage, roofing, demolition, trucking, waste disposal, medical supplies and similar businesses.

Another concern is the status of current government contractors in the affected areas. FPDS-NG is compiling a list of the government contractors located in the disaster area. Agencies are then contacting them to determine their status. D&B posted special notices on over 130,000 business reports in the affected counties indicating that these businesses may have been affected by the hurricane and its aftermath. They will conduct an ongoing investigation to determine the status of these businesses. For more information on this article, contact Lisa Cliff, IAE Office of Communications at [integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov](mailto:integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov) or 703-872-8593.

### **GSA Relief Efforts**

We are fortunate that all GSA associates in the Gulf Coast area have been accounted for, but a number of them have lost their homes or are faced with significant property damage. To help these fellow GSA associates cope with this hardship, GSA has established a GSA Hurricane Katrina Emergency Relief Fund through the Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA), a private non-profit charity. This fund has been expanded to also include GSA associates affected by Hurricane Rita. FEEA is a participating charity of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). FEEA will account for the donations and administer various grant and loan programs. You can contribute to this fund in several ways:

1. Make an immediate donation by check. Make your check payable to "GSA Hurricane Katrina Emergency Relief Fund" and mail it to:

FEEA GSA FUND  
8441 W. Bowles Avenue  
Suite 200  
Littleton, CO 80123-9501


2. Charge your gift to your credit card by phone or online. Call 303-933-7580 and be sure to specify the donation is for the "FEEA Fund for GSA Employees." Online, go to <http://www.feea.org>, click on the "Give Online" button in the upper right (with the green \$), then proceed to the online donation page. Choose "GSA Fund" from the drop-down list. Complete the form as instructed on the site.

3. You can also contribute through the annual CFC which starts in October. Payroll deductions through the CFC annual campaign, though not immediate, will provide long-term assistance during FY 2006. Mark your CFC pledge card with FEEA CFC 1234, write "GSA Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund" across the top and make a copy of the form. Submit your original CFC pledge card as usual along with the copy.

However you give, please specify that your donation is earmarked for the GSA Hurricane Katrina Emergency Relief Fund. If you have questions about this program, send an e-mail to [gsavolunteers@gsa.gov](mailto:gsavolunteers@gsa.gov).

A list of many worthwhile national charitable organizations that provide disaster relief is available on the web by visiting <http://www.opm.gov/cfc/disasters/CharityList.asp>.

**Due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Rita, relief agencies will need even more funds. In many cases, funds donated for Hurricane Katrina cannot be used for Hurricane Rita relief so agencies will be setting up new drives to finance**



**Rita rescue operations.** Information about contributing to the annual CFC will be distributed to associates by local CFC coordinators and keyworkers soon.

Many GSA associates would like to volunteer in their local communities to help victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Local chapters of the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, other community-based organizations, and religious organizations are all good places to donate and to volunteer. The American Red Cross has many needs, including needing volunteers to work their phone banks to answer the many calls from the public. You can find your closest Red Cross chapter through this locator: <http://www.redcross.org/where/chapts.asp>.

USA Freedom Corps (<http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>) is also a resource for finding additional volunteer opportunities in the Gulf Coast area and in your community. A few agencies involved in hurricane relief are:

American Red Cross  
P.O. Box 37243  
Washington, DC 20013  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Salvation Army National Headquarters  
P.O. Box 269  
Alexandria, VA 22313  
[www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

Humane Society of the U.S.  
2100 L St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)

Habitat for Humanity  
121 Habitat Street  
Americus, GA 31709-3498  
[www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

## Help Provided Through FirstGov.gov

At [www.FirstGov.gov](http://www.FirstGov.gov) associates can get the latest available federal disaster recovery information as well as access to federal services. Through 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4636), associates can find answers to questions about finding loved ones, how to contribute, information on housing, and much more. With FirstGov.gov's Spanish language web portal, FirstGov en Espanol ([www.espanol.gov](http://www.espanol.gov)), associates have the opportunity to access tens of thousands of federal and state Spanish-language webpages providing translated information as well as services for those in need. Links on FirstGov.gov provide information on How to Avoid Scams and Fraud, Replacing Vital Documents, Finding Loved Ones, How You Can Help, Telephone Hotlines and many others.

## Help Provided Through OPM

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) created a site to keep federal employees informed about important human resources benefit information. The site features information such as emergency leave transfer, military leave, insurance retirement payments, and human resources flexibilities available to assist federal employees. To visit the site, go to <http://www.opm.gov/katrina/employees.asp>. Employees can relay their whereabouts to their agencies by calling a toll free number 1-800-307-8298 operated by OPM.

## GSA Offers Free Telework Centers Through End of Year

After Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, Linda M. Springer, the Director of OPM, urged agencies to use flexibilities in workplace rules, such as telecommuting, to reduce fuel consumption. As a result, effective



[www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov), click on “Acquisition Policy” and then “Acquisition Alert.” For more information, contact Linda Nelson at [Linda.nelson@gsa.gov](mailto:Linda.nelson@gsa.gov) or 202-501-1900.

### **Alert for Emergency Procurement Authority**

immediately, the GSA-sponsored Washington Metropolitan Telework Centers are open for federal telework usage at no charge to agencies through December 31, 2005. If you think a telework center arrangement can work for you, talk with your supervisor, then your local telework coordinator. Visit the new Hurricane Katrina webpage established by the Office of the Chief People Officer at <http://cpo.gsa.gov/HurricaneKatrina/KatrinaHRdisasterInfo.htm> and check under Telework for center locations, contacts, and required forms. Representative Frank R. Wolf (R-Virginia) praised GSA for this decision in his September 15 letter to President Bush. For more information, contact Marge Higgins at [marge.higgins@gsa.gov](mailto:marge.higgins@gsa.gov) or 202-501-3764.

### **OCAO Announces “Acquisition Alert!”**

The Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer (OCAO) has established “Acquisition Alert.” Acquisition Alert is intended to serve as a way to provide GSA acquisition associates reminders and advance information on pertinent acquisition issues. Generally, the information contained in the Acquisition Alert will highlight key policy and procedures already in the FAR or the GSA Acquisition Manual or information that is coming down the pike that will have a dramatic affect on the acquisition process. Associates are encouraged to consult other material that is referenced in the Acquisition Alert for supplemental information. The Acquisition Alerts can be found on the GSA homepage,

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of DHS determined that existing circumstances warrant the exercise of emergency authority in support of a contingency operation. As a result, GSA micro-purchase cardholders and contracting officers are authorized to purchase, in support of the current emergency, at the higher thresholds. GSA associates should review the guidelines in GSA Acquisition Alert 2005-05. The following thresholds have been raised:

- **Micro-purchase Threshold:** The micro-purchase threshold is raised to \$15,000 (except for construction, which remains at \$2,000).
- **Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT):** The SAT is raised to \$250,000.
- **Simplified Acquisitions under the Test Program for Certain Commercial Items:** The threshold is raised to \$10 million.

Purchases using these procurement authorities must have a clear and direct relationship to the support of the current national emergency. Consequently, a determination(s) must be made in the form of a brief memorandum to the contract file specifying the product or service being procured and its relationship to support the response to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. For more information, contact Gerald Zaffos at [Gerald.zaffos@gsa.gov](mailto:Gerald.zaffos@gsa.gov) or 202-208-6091.







## Disaster Recovery Business Workshop

The Southeast Sunbelt Region's Office of Small Business Utilization hosted a Disaster Recovery Business Opportunities Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia on September 14. This was in response to the small business community's overwhelming interest in providing products and services on behalf of the Katrina effort. The forum focused on advising the small business community on how they should get ready to offer their products or services to GSA for disaster relief/recovery purposes. Mildred Quinley, Director of the Office, delivered the opening remarks and welcomed the 125 small business representatives explaining the relationship between FEMA and GSA. Regional Small Business Technical Advisor Dinora Gonzalez conducted a "How to Do Business with the Government" workshop; clarified information on emergency contracting procedures; highlighted information of the Stafford Act, which gives procurement preference to local businesses; talked about the latest available federal disaster recovery policies; and provided an opportunity for questions and answers. For more information, contact Dinora Gonzalez at [dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov](mailto:dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov) or 404-331-3031.



## OCAO Announces New APW Contact

The new GSA Acquisition Planning Wizard (APW) contact is Procurement Analyst Althea Kireilis. OCAO encourages the GSA acquisition workforce to use the APW (<http://apw.gsa.gov/>) to help prepare acquisition plans required by GSA order OGP 2800.1, Acquisition Planning. First-time users are requested to enter their internet address. A temporary password will be sent by e-mail.


This may take a few minutes, so be patient. After a temporary password is received, sign onto the Wizard, change your password, accept the standard disclosure statement and rules of behavior, and begin preparing acquisition plans. After signing in, a page with a number of tabs across the top and a message that says, "No results found" will appear. This means that first-time users do not have any plans listed. Simply click on "Create a plan" and begin. Users of the Wizard do not have to submit copies of acquisition plans. For more information, contact Althea Kireilis at [althea.kireilis@gsa.gov](mailto:althea.kireilis@gsa.gov) or 202-208-4724.



## Shelton Heads Federal Acquisition Service

GSA has released its final reorganization plan, which calls for merging FTS and FSS into the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS). Six zones will be created to replace the 11 regions and chains of command will be reshaped to increase oversight without losing flexibility. One of the first steps taken toward implementing this plan was Administrator Perry's announcement that Barbara L. Shelton will serve as FAS Acting Commissioner. Ms. Shelton will assume this role in the Office of the Administrator pending the completion of the reorganization.

Ms. Shelton will have responsibility for leading the work remaining to complete the organization design and establishing the new FAS organization. She will also provide oversight for managing the day-to-day operations of the existing FTS and FSS organizations. In making the announcement,



Administrator Perry said, “Barbara has been a key leader of the team that has worked to develop the draft plan for the very challenging task of consolidating FTS and FSS into FAS. Through her leadership and expertise, she has contributed significantly to the effort to develop an FAS organization which will meet the key objectives to:

- Improve GSA’s organizational capability to meet the increasing needs of our federal customers for excellent acquisition services;
- Further career development of our acquisition workforce;
- Enhance efficiency and effectiveness of acquisition activities and the supporting business processes of internal financial management and business systems;
- Ensure full compliance with laws, regulations and policies;
- Ensure consistency of operating procedures and practices among the component parts of the organization; and
- Ensure accountability of the national and regional office leadership who have a role and responsibility for performance results.

Ms. Shelton has been Acting FTS Commissioner since February 11, 2005. Ms. Shelton said, “I look forward to continuing my work with Administrator Perry, GSA’s management team, and our many talented associates. We are focused on completing the design of the new FAS organization, and we are strongly committed to developing competent and engaged FAS professionals who deliver consistently positive and compliant acquisition experiences for our customers.”




### **PBS’s Construction CO Council**

The Construction Contracting Officer Council (CCOC) represents the PBS associates responsible for the procurement of design and construction services across the nation. Members and alternates are appointed from each region by the Assistant Regional Administrator of PBS. Founded in 2003, it provides leadership to the industry on procurement issues and serves as the national reference on procurement policy, advice, principles and best practice initiatives. The Council has positioned itself to serve as leaders in procurement thinking through its ability to address opportunities and challenges confronting PBS procurement teams on a daily basis from both a strategic and tactical approach.

The Council adds value and promotes excellence to PBS’ delivery of services to the customer community. The Council develops nationally consistent approaches to procurement policies, processes and practices, with an increasing emphasis on:

- electronic commerce for government procurement;
- public sector infrastructure needs;
- competitive sourcing and contracting; and
- improving access to government markets for socio-economic enterprises.





With the CCOC operations at a national level, the benefits flow to PBS, the industry and the community through efficiency gains and reduction of costs to the taxpayers. These benefits are achieved through:

- forging a consistent and coordinated national approach to procurement and construction activities;
- leading the procurement team in developing and refining all project delivery methods;
- enhancing the way PBS works with the private sector to deliver services to the community;
- reducing duplicate activities;
- drawing on and sharing lessons learned;
- providing national leadership to the procurement and construction industries to address changing market needs; and
- providing a national forum on procurement policy, advice, principles and best practice initiatives.

To maximize the Council's capacity to provide associates and other stakeholders with ready access to a knowledge pool of information, the CCOC is developing a Quickplace website to optimize information exchanges. The website will provide a knowledge hub for associates and will include an active knowledge gathering and dissemination process, as well as a knowledge repository (i.e., samples, lessons learned, Q&A, etc.). This knowledge hub will provide sound advice for associates on changing procurement technologies, communications, and processes which will improve our ability to perform. For more information, contact Jacquelyn Owens at [jacquelyn.owens@gsa.gov](mailto:jacquelyn.owens@gsa.gov) or 202-208-2339

or Vinita Canright at [vinita.canright@gsa.gov](mailto:vinita.canright@gsa.gov) or 816-926-8308.


## Professional Development--



### Federal Government Procurement Conference of the Americas

In the last few years, through the efforts of the Organization of American States (OAS) and others, forums have been established in Latin America for sharing information on general e-procurement initiatives and to support dialogue among procurement executives of central agencies. This collaboration resulted in the first Federal Government Procurement Conference of the Americas in Vancouver in November 2004. The overwhelming success of that conference led to the decision to hold annual conferences.

This year the second annual Federal Government Procurement Conference of the Americas will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, October 31-November 3, 2005. Co-sponsors include GSA, OAS, and the Canadian Commercial Corporation. The goal is to continue to strengthen networking opportunities by providing keynote speakers covering a variety of topics, workshop sessions or forums discussing greater standardization of policies and procedures in procurement, and exhibitors. The conference provides senior government officials and senior procurement officials from governments within the Americas opportunities to share experiences



and address common issues. Some of those issues include e-procurement, expanding their country's supplier base, transparency, procurement regulations, and standards. For other government participants, the conference provides a forum to reach a supplier community which will be all the more important with efforts to integrate trade within the Americas. This conference will provide networking opportunities through workshop sessions, meetings, and a showcase/exhibit environment.

For additional information and to register, please visit our website at [www.fgpca.org](http://www.fgpca.org) or contact Michael Berkholtz at [Michael.Berkholtz@gsa.gov](mailto:Michael.Berkholtz@gsa.gov) or at 202-208-1806.



### **FSS Contract Management 1st National Training Conference**

The Contract Management Center, part of the FSS Office of Acquisition Management, hosted its first national training conference in Nashville, Tennessee, August 9-11, 2005. More than 225 Administrative Contracting Officers, Industrial Operations Analysts, support staff and managers attended workshops on a variety of topics including contract scope and Trade Agreement Act compliance, electronic contracting, small business subcontracting, and contractor performance evaluation. Representatives from most of the FSS Acquisition Centers attended as well. A highlight of the event was the keynote address by GSA CAO Emily Murphy, who shared her thoughts on acquisition workforce issues and the new Federal Acquisition Service.

The three-day intensive training sessions gave the associates in the Contract Management organization a long-awaited opportunity to discuss and move toward resolution on skill deficiencies for improved performance, further assess developmental needs, promote consistency, expand on known local successes and maximize efficiencies on a national basis. The conference also afforded opportunities for networking with associates performing similar jobs in different parts of the country, and for sharing operational best practices across regions.

With the ever increasing responsibilities in the contract management arena, it is even more important to identify and strengthen core competencies required to execute increasingly complex tasks. To this end, the Contract Management organization is developing associates for the changing environment and harnessing existing skills for improvement in the future. For more information, contact Marydel Kemp at [marydel.kemp@gsa.gov](mailto:marydel.kemp@gsa.gov) or 703-605-2528.

### **Big APPLExpo**

The Northeast and Caribbean Region hosted its highly successful sixth annual Big Acquisition Products/Services Procurement Logistics Expo — Big APPLExpo — at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York on July 12, 2005. The Big APPLExpo training event offered GSA's customer community an enhanced learning environment with a wide array of CEU accredited training and provided vendors an opportunity to exhibit their products and services and meet face-to-face with current and potential customers. This unique opportunity to meet with 120 commercial partners, obtain training with a choice of 15 classes, and network with other associates was well received by the attendees. This event hosted 300 federal, state and local customers. All of the classes offered participants CEU credits that can be

credited to fulfill job/agency annual training requirements.



The BIG APPLE Expo training was surveyed using the IACET Program approved standard training survey instrument. The overall results were extremely positive with the overwhelming majority of comments being hugely complimentary. For more information, contact Sandy Sabbers at [alexandra.sabbers@gsa.gov](mailto:alexandra.sabbers@gsa.gov) or 212-264-2460.



### **FTS's Ries Receives PBSA Award**

On June 8, 2005, Larry Ries, Project Manager for the FTS Federal Systems Integration and Management Center (FEDSIM®) received GSA's Excellence in Performance-Based

Service Acquisition Award. Deputy CAO David Drabkin presented the award for Ries' acquisition expertise in support of the Securities and Exchange Commission's \$167 million performance-based IT Enterprise Infrastructure Systems Support (ISS) task. The ISS task was identified in a GAO report as one of the most successful performance-based contracts. The performance-based contract approach employed formed an effective partnership between the contractor and agency, and improved the agency's infrastructure operations. Let's all congratulate Larry on his outstanding accomplishment! For more information, contact Jeff Williams at [Jeffrey.williams@gsa.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.williams@gsa.gov) or 703-306-7586.

### **FAI/DAU Hold Seminar on "Green IT"**

On August 10, 2005, the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) and Defense Acquisition University (DAU) co-sponsored the Acquisition Learning Seminar on "Green Information Technology (IT)". Speakers from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided information on the Federal Electronics Challenge and the Recycling Electronics and Asset Disposition (READ) Services. They focused on the role of procurement in sustainable electronics stewardship. They also presented useful information on how agencies properly dispose of their obsolete electronics in an environmentally friendly manner at an affordable cost.

For those who didn't have an opportunity to attend, you can view the presentation at the FAI website at [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov) or DAU website at [www.dau.mil](http://www.dau.mil) under the "DAU video library, 03 Continuous Learning & Conferences" section. This seminar and others are now available online. Information about the next Acquisition Learning Seminar, "Strategic Sourcing," is also available on the FAI website.



That seminar is scheduled for October 18; an announcement with more details will be made soon. For more information on Acquisition Learning Seminars, contact Maria Hernandez via e-mail at [maria\\_hernandez@sra.com](mailto:maria_hernandez@sra.com).



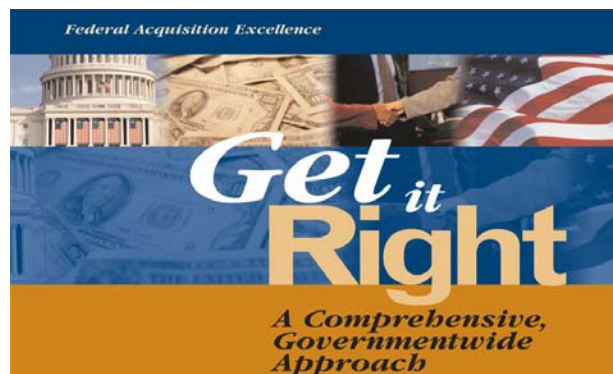
## Usability University Fall Semester

Usability University has finished its third semester, Spring 2005, and continues to provide a valuable service to federal communication technology developers. The university just released its Fall 2005 schedule which can be found at [www.usability.gov](http://www.usability.gov) under "Events and Meetings." Six 2-day courses and six 2-hour seminars will be offered. Registration is required and space is limited. For more information e-mail: [usabilityuniversity@gsa.gov](mailto:usabilityuniversity@gsa.gov) or call the GSA User Experience Group at 202-501-1926.

## Free Online EVM Training

FAI and DAU recently established a new partnership to train and develop the federal acquisition workforce, including program and project managers. As part of this partnership, DAU is offering a free, online, self-paced course on Earned Value Management (EVM), available specifically for non-DOD agencies. The course summarizes the language, data reports, metrics, graphs, and management processes associated with EVM as they apply to acquisition management. The course emphasizes the processes related to the Performance Measurement Baseline (PMB), the Integrated Baseline Review (IBR), and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for EVM Systems. Students also evaluate and compute basic EVM metrics and EVM metric-based Estimates at Completion.

This is a fundamental course for people in positions requiring knowledge and use of EVM. It is available on a first-come basis and there are no prerequisites. The first class was held October 4. Additional classes will be offered in the near future. More information about the course and special registration process is available at <http://www.fai.gov/evmtrain.pdf>.




## Getting It Right at GSA!

There are a number of efforts underway to "Get It Right" at GSA—we list one below. If your organization wishes to publicize a GSA "Get It Right" event or initiative, please forward the information to the Editor, [judy.steele@gsa.gov](mailto:judy.steele@gsa.gov).

## Heartland Associate Joins SARA Panel

Matt Verhulst, Heartland Director of the Contracts Division, Small Business Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) Center, recently delivered a presentation and led a discussion regarding GSA's GWACs before the Services



Acquisition Reform Act (SARA) Acquisition Advisory Panel in Long Beach, California. The panel's statutory charter is to review and recommend changes to acquisition laws and regulations to ensure effective and appropriate contracting practices. The non-partisan advisory panel consists of respected acquisition experts from a wide variety of backgrounds both within and outside of the government. Some of the topics the panel is examining include the use of commercial practices in federal contracting, performance-based contracting, performance of acquisition functions across agency lines of responsibility, and governmentwide contracts. The panel's end product will be a report to advise OMB on effective ways to improve government contracting. After his presentation, Verhulst accepted the panel's request for his continued assistance in their efforts. For more information, contact Matthew Verhulst at [matthew.verhulst@gsa.gov](mailto:matthew.verhulst@gsa.gov) or 816-926-1366.



## **Small Business Corner—**

### **DOE Small Business Conference**


The Southeast Sunbelt Region and 21 other government agencies participated in the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Small Business Conference June 12-15, 2005, in Nashville, Tennessee. This year's theme, "Securing Economic Freedom - Empowering Small Business," emphasized the federal government's commitment to promote

contract opportunities for small businesses across America. The conference brought together federal government representatives, prime contractors, nonprofit resource providers and small business participants.

A business exposition allowed businesses to showcase their products and services to the 144 exhibitors, and a "Matchmaking Forum" provided a unique opportunity for small businesses to schedule one-on-one meetings with federal and prime representatives. Mildred Quinley, Director of the Regional Office of Small Business Utilization, brought greetings on behalf of Associate Administrator for Small Business Utilization Felipe Mendoza. Regional Small Business Technical Advisor Dinora Gonzalez spoke about the agency's Multiple Award Schedules program. Other Regional associates assisting at the matchmaking and exhibitor tables were Calvin Stevens, FSS Supervisory Marketing Specialist; David Gibson, PBS Small Business Specialist; and Eddie Mills, FTS IT Specialist. Facilitating this event on behalf of the Office of Small Business Utilization were Director of Small Business Programs Algeon Gaither and Program Analyst Liz Ivey. Approximately 400 participants attended the event. For more information, contact Dinora Gonzalez at [dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov](mailto:dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov) or 404-331-3031.

### **United Indian Development Association Small Business Conference**

The Southeast Sunbelt region participated along with twenty other government agencies and eight prime contractors at this year's United Indian Development Association Small Business conference in Orlando, Florida from July 25 – 28. The theme of the conference "First Americans' First Business Priority: Make the Connection" attracted approximately 150 small businesses across the country, most of which were Native American Small Businesses.



The event gave small business owners an opportunity to meet with buyers, contracting officers, small business specialists, technical resource providers, and military base procurement officials. Dinora Gonzalez, Small Business Technical Advisor with the Office of Small Business Utilization and David Gibson, PBS Small Business Specialist presented a workshop on the federal procurement and GSA schedules process. They also counseled and provided small businesses with information on marketing their schedule contracts. For more information, contact Dinora Gonzalez at [dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov](mailto:dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov) or 404-331-3031.

### **NCR Partners with Hoyer on Forum**

On August 26, NCR partnered with U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland) during a federal small business forum in Maryland's 5th Congressional District. NCR Regional Administrator Donald C. Williams welcomed participants to the event explaining the opportunities that were available. Small business owners registered for the forum which included real estate leasing, supply schedules, IT procurements, and small business procurement programs. The forum was presented by federal, state, and local government representatives. NCR's Small Business Utilization center worked with Congressman Hoyer's staff to plan and execute the event. Arnetta Cook, Art Turowski, Graig and Chris Bennethum offered their expertise to insure the forum's success. For more information, contact Shaunta Johnson at [Shaunta.Johnson@gsa.gov](mailto:Shaunta.Johnson@gsa.gov) or 202-708-5804.

### **“Opening Doors” Conference**

The Pacific Rim Regional Office of Small Business Utilization held the small business conference “Opening Doors,” in Phoenix, Arizona, the first week in September. The conference focused on navigating the federal procurement system for the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned, American Indian/Alaska Native, and all small businesses. Federal agencies partnering with GSA included the SBA, the Minority Business Development Agency, and the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, Energy, State, Interior; Commerce and Agriculture. Other participants included the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Arizona Minority Business Development Agency and various state and local government agencies.

Administrator Perry, in a keynote address, said, “One of the government's most important roles is to help create an environment where businesses can develop, grow and prosper, thereby creating a strong national economy and more jobs. As small businesses are vital to the overall economy, federal agencies should do all they can to nurture the success of small entrepreneurs.”

GSA's National Office of Small Business Utilization supported the Region in the planning and execution of this conference. The major purchasing activities of GSA, along with the OSBU and the GSA Native American Business Center exhibited and participated in workshops to emphasize the “one face of GSA.” The conference was attended by approximately 1,000 registrants with 85 exhibitors. One-on-one match making sessions with private contractors and federal agencies accommodated approximately 300 vendors. For more information, contact Pamela Smith-Cressel at 213-894-3210, or Algeon Gaither at 202-501-1872.





## OGP's Flaak Addresses GSA Small Business Advisory Committee

On September 1, Robert Flaak of OGP's Committee Management Secretariat addressed the GSA Small Business Advisory Committee at its first meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. Flaak briefed the Committee on Federal Advisory Committee operations and procedures. The meeting was held in conjunction with the GSA small business conference "Opening Doors." The Small Business Advisory Committee was chartered to provide recommendations to the Associate Administrator for Small Business Utilization that will allow GSA to advance and improve its small business procurement program. The members of the committee are appointed by Administrator Perry. The Designated Federal Officer for the Small Business Advisory Committee is Denis Peck. For more information, contact Robert Flaak at [Robert.flaak@gsa.gov](mailto:Robert.flaak@gsa.gov) or 202-208-2964, or Denis Peck at [denis.peck@gsa.gov](mailto:denis.peck@gsa.gov) or 202-219-3866.

## Green Procurement — Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Eleven federal agencies and the Executive Office of the President have signed on to a Memo of Understanding which commits them to reduce the environmental impacts of their procurement, use, and disposal of electronics equipment. Collectively these agencies represent over 80% of the federal annual IT budget. Several of these agencies have begun incorporating a new green procurement tool into their IT hardware contracts to help meet these goals. The Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool, or EPEAT, is a tool designed to help purchasers compare and select computer desktops, laptops, and monitors based on their environmental attributes. EPEAT has two main components:

- an IEEE American National Standard for the Environmental Assessment of Personal Computer Products, which defines what an environmentally preferable computer desktop, laptop, and/or monitor is; and
- a website which will list EPEAT qualified products and system that will verify vendor claims.


So far, the Army, DOI, and the VA have included EPEAT in their IT hardware solicitations or contracts, and other agencies are following their lead shortly. For more information on how to help your agency buy more environmentally preferable computer desktops, laptops, and monitors, contact Holly Elwood at [elwood.holly@epa.gov](mailto:elwood.holly@epa.gov). For more information about the Federal Electronics Challenge or EPEAT, go to [www.federalelectronicschallenge.net](http://www.federalelectronicschallenge.net) or [www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net).



## Buy Accessible Wizard Update

In the last edition of the newsletter we reported on the progress of the Buy Accessible Wizard, GSA's web-based application. Specifically the Wizard:

- Supports micropurchases with a streamlined process;
- Is certified as successfully meeting security requirements as a minimal risk application; and,
- Is available now to all agencies either via the Internet at [www.buyaccessible.gov](http://www.buyaccessible.gov) or as an Intranet application that can be implemented within any agency.



GSA's IT Accessibility and Workforce Office of Technology Strategy has made much more progress in the past few months. The Wizard now provides a market research capability, quickly linking federal agencies to accessibility information that companies have provided about their products and services. The new Market Research Data Center makes it easy for industry to keep their accessibility information current. Agency buyers can identify a variety of information resources from the Data Center that they can use to complete their market research. This research, in turn, can be used by the Buy Accessible Wizard. Wizard output includes a summary that serves as the primary audit trail document for each acquisition.

In another development, on August 11, 2005, a letter was issued by OFPP to all Chief Acquisition Officers and Chief Information Officers citing the Wizard as an important tool to "guide requiring officials and acquisition professionals in their effort to comply with the requirements of Section 508 and ensure that government is accessible to all citizens." For more information about the Buy Accessible Wizard, contact Terry Weaver at [terry.weaver@gsa.gov](mailto:terry.weaver@gsa.gov) or 202-501-4906.

### **GSA/PBS/JWOD Strategic Alliance**

It has been nearly four years since GSA partnered with the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled ("the Committee"), the federal agency which administers and oversees the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program; NISH, a central nonprofit agency under the JWOD Program, which serves people with a range of severe disabilities; and JWOD-affiliated nonprofit agencies to develop an interagency strategic alliance. The alliance was developed for several reasons, including providing quality service for PBS and increasing the employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities while ensuring


the alliance did not have an adverse impact on small business contractors.

Under the alliance, NISH and its JWOD-associated nonprofit agencies have the opportunity to become a vendor of choice to PBS. However, the importance of PBS meeting its other socioeconomic goals is clear among the partners. The alliance states, "The Committee and NISH recognize PBS's need to achieve its other socioeconomic goals, and will not adversely impact small businesses."

To avoid negatively impacting PBS's socioeconomic goals, the PBS/JWOD working group and implementation team have taken the necessary steps to ensure each PBS regional office can achieve such goals prior to janitorial work being offered to the JWOD Program. Prior to adding any location to the Procurement List, the Committee determines if adding the location will cause a severe adverse impact on the current contractor. If the Committee determines that adding the location will, in fact, have a severe adverse impact on the current contractor, it will not add the location to the Procurement List.

In addition, prior to GSA/PBS offering work to the JWOD Program, regional points of contact review their small business goals. If it is determined that a janitorial project is needed to meet other socio-economic goals, the project is not offered to the JWOD Program. The one exception is work currently being performed in-house, by PBS associates who are veterans. The Edgar Amendment to the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, Section 210(f), requires that this work be offered to the JWOD Program if it is contracted out.

The efforts of the strategic alliance have been successful to date. The employment opportunities for people with severe disabili-



-ities have increased while ensuring other socioeconomic goals are not adversely impacted. In 2004, under the GSA/JWOD strategic alliance the employment of people with severe disabilities was increased by over 125 Full Time Equivalents. Data received for 2002 through 2004 indicates the overall small business goals were met.

GSA believes the alliance will continue to be a win-win for all because it continues to move us closer to vision—to establishing a strategic alliance for long-term, mutual benefits, that delivers **improved** processes for contracting, **recognizes** JWOD as the vendor of choice and **values** market-pricing, job creation, ease of process, flexibility, quality and industry innovation. For more information, contact Karone Blondin at [karone.blondin@gsa.gov](mailto:karone.blondin@gsa.gov) or 202-501-3518.



### **October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

“...Freedom is no half-and-half affair. If [a] citizen is guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must have equal opportunity in the marketplace...We are poor indeed if this nation cannot afford to lift from every recess of American life the dread fear of the unemployed that they are not needed in the world.” – President Franklin D. Roosevelt

National Disability Employment Awareness Month promotes the recognition of individuals who support the JWOD Program in their federal agencies, and encourages dissemination of knowledge about JWOD capabilities that meet their specific needs. October’s observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an ideal time to reflect upon the impact of the JWOD Program.

Initially approved under President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938, the Wagner-O’Day Act provided employment opportunities for people who are blind by allowing them to manufacture mops and brooms for procurement by the federal government. In 1971, Senator Jacob Javits expanded the Act to include people with severe disabilities other than blindness and to allow for the provision of services.

GSA is the JWOD Program’s largest civilian agency customer and has been a valued partner in ensuring that federal customers have access to the JWOD products and services they need. As a result of GSA’s internal support for the JWOD Program, and its advocacy of the program with its federal customers, GSA has played an important role in increasing jobs for people who are blind or severely disabled. As a result of GSA’s strong support, the JWOD Program provided federal customers with nearly \$270 million in products and services during FY04. Today, this unique federal procurement program employs more than 45,000 Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Federal agencies may commemorate the JWOD Program in various ways during October as well as throughout the year. Please contact the JWOD Program if you require any assistance in planning a JWOD celebration during National Disability Employment Awareness Month at [jwodworks@jwod.gov](mailto:jwodworks@jwod.gov) or visit [www.jwod.gov](http://www.jwod.gov) for more information.





## **Strategic Sourcing Part 2: Commodity Councils and Lines of Business**

By Tom Kireilis, SmartBUY Senior Program Manager

[On May 20, 2005, OMB issued a letter to all agencies concerning the need for agencies to develop a plan to implement strategic sourcing. Since this is a major OMB initiative, we featured an article on Strategic Sourcing by Tom Kirielis in the Summer 2005 newsletter. Due to the length of the article, we include Part 2 here.]

Strategic Sourcing is an approach where the buyer (Government) analyzes what it's buying, what the market conditions are and who can supply those goods or services. Then the buyer uses that information—plus innovative contracting techniques—to find the best values available in the marketplace. The focus of this paper is to examine some approaches currently underfoot with regard to strategic sourcing.

### Commodity Councils

Commodity Councils are a cross-functional sourcing team with a focus on bringing the right people together to sit in the right place, at the right time, to make decisions about that commodities base.

The Commodity Council implements contracts developed under the short term “To Be” using industry and government best practices, to initiate the strategic plan. This portion of the process most closely resembles the traditional acquisition and contracting process. The functions listed below may or may not be performed by contracting officials serving on the commodity


council. Commodity councils must ensure close coordination and involvement if non-council contracting officials are performing the actual award and management of the resulting vehicles. This step involves:

- Conducting pre-Request for Proposal (RFP) supplier conferences or industry meetings to facilitate the understanding of the strategic plan and intended process;
- Participating significantly to ensure potential sources fully understand the strategy;
- Assisting contracting officers responding to industry concerns;
- Developing and issuing RFPs—
  - Evaluation/negotiation/award of contract vehicles,
  - Serving on the source selection board,
  - Developing and implementing post-award management process focused on performance measures,
  - Participating significantly on a routine basis.

The Air Force, for example, revised the Air Force FAR Supplements (AFFARS) to enable the establishment and function of commodity councils in acquisition. The Air Force identifies groups of items (commodities) purchased by activities throughout the Air Force that can be provided better (faster, better quality, less expensive, etc.) if a single activity establishes and implements a common strategy and contract vehicle for the items. Ordering at the established prices can be decentralized once the contract is established.

In a similar fashion, DHS is expanding their IT Acquisition Center (ITAC), which is still in its formative stage. The ITAC serves as a centralized buying hub for all IT hardware and software required by DHS.





According to Greg Rothwell, DHS Chief Procurement Officer, ITAC, which was formed last year, will help the DHS Chief Information Officer with “incredible visibility and strategic leverage” in buying technology for DHS, which amounts to about \$5 billion of the \$11 billion to \$12 billion the department spends. GSA is providing the “operational arms and legs under a DHS flag” through a memorandum of understanding while the Center is being organized.

### Lines of Business Initiatives

In March 2004, OMB kicked off a governmentwide analysis of five Lines of Business (LoB) supporting the President’s Management Agenda goal to expand e-government. Interagency teams will examine business and IT data and best practices for each LoB—financial, human resources, grants, health, and case management systems. In March 2005, OMB initiated a task force to address the IT Security LoB. The Security LoB task force will identify problems and propose solutions to strengthen the ability of all agencies to: (1) conduct training, specialized training and knowledge sharing; threat awareness and incident response capability; program management; security lifecycle; selection, evaluation, and implementation of security products; and (2) defend against threats, correct vulnerabilities, and manage resulting risks (including those specific to a single agency or shared among other agencies).

The goal of the effort is to identify opportunities in FY 2006 and beyond to reduce the cost of government and improve services to citizens through business performance improvements. OMB and the LoB task forces will use business principles and best practices to identify common solutions for business processes and/or technology-based shared services for government agencies. SmartBUY is well positioned to support each LoB in preparation for the acquisition of both software and services.

principles and best practices to identify common solutions for business processes and/or technology-based shared services to be made available to government agencies. Driven from a business perspective rather than a technology focus, the solutions will address distinct business improvements to enhance government’s performance and services for citizens. The end result of LoB efforts will be to save taxpayer dollars, reduce administrative burden, and significantly improve service delivery.

### Future Outlook

Strategic sourcing is perhaps the area of business strategy that is most often overlooked or poorly addressed and yet it can deliver huge benefits in terms of better focus, radically improved delivery and reduced costs. For more information on this article, contact Tom Kireilis in the FTS Office of IT Solutions at [Thomas.kireilis@gsa.gov](mailto:Thomas.kireilis@gsa.gov) or 703-306-7698.



### **Did You Know?**

Did you know there is a new “Quicklink” to access the “Forum” on the GSA homepage? Just go to [www.gsa.gov/acquisitionletters](http://www.gsa.gov/acquisitionletters) and all the editions are posted.



## 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.

### **Federal Real Property Conference**

Ronald Reagan Building

Washington, DC

October 18-19, 2005

<http://www.frpa.us>

Contact: Rebekah Pearson 202-208-1850

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Federal Government Procurement Conference of the Americas**

Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel

Atlanta, GA

October 31-Nov 3, 2005

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

### **NCMA 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Government Contract Management Conference**

Sheraton Premier at Tysons Corner

Vienna, VA

December 5 – 6, 2005

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

### **NCMA’s World Congress 2006**

Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Atlanta, GA

April 10 – 12, 2006

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

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) or 202-501-4994 with comments or suggestions.

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