# Procurement Countdown

International Space Station Contract Strategy

By Robert Kolb, Johnson Space Center

The International Space Station (ISS) Procurement Office has been working for a year developing a contract strategy to put in place by Fiscal Year 2004. The strategy reflects the ISS program's progression from a development program into an operations program. The strategy takes functions from 26 plus contracts in the ISS Procurement Office and logically groups the work into six new contracts. Additionally, the strategy incorporates certain ISS work being accomplished through other institutional offices at the Johnson Space Center as well as work being done at other NASA centers. This contract strategy which will result in the six new ISS program contracts has one overall goal: "requirements management."

The specific goals of this strategy are: to build a contract structure that will allow greater levels of privatization/autonomy of the ISS in the future; to promote synergism in contract content; to minimize duplication of specialized expertise and infrastructure in multiple contracts; to provide for focused accountability from contractors; to minimize formal product development, management, and delivery between contract boundaries; to maximize value through competition; to save costs through requirements management and reducing
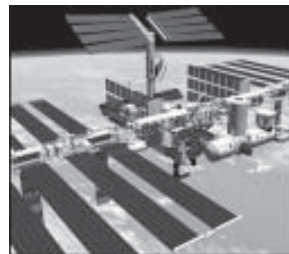
infrastructure; and to develop contracts that maximize performance measurement analysis and reporting. Another specific goal of this strategy is to organize the contract structure the way the ISS program and the human space flight programs are managed - a progressive move from hardware development to sustaining, to mission integration, to executing operations.

This strategy organizes the ISS program's functions by contract. The program will have two program support contracts that will assist in the overall management of the ISS program. These two contracts are the Program Integration and Control contract and ISS Mission Integration contract.

Contract 1

The effort under the Program Integration and Control contract will require the contractor to provide such effort as: support the ISS program responsibilities to overall strategically plan and manage policy of all segments of the ISS; perform systems requirements management/functionality of all segments of the ISS; integrate services for all segments; support ISS commercialization/ initiatives; coordinate technical integration of the international partners; and manage ISS program agreements with other programs and organizations.

Highlights...

Meet NASA's new Inspector General, Moose Cobb, page 6.

Say Farewell to LaRC's Connie Stott, page 7.

See how one center "slices the procurement pie" on page 8.

A PDPer describes his rotation at the Pentagon on page 10.

The features in this issue focus on Frank Goldston at JSC, Ann Sharpe at SSC, and the ELV group at KSC. Those articles begin on page 12.

An update of e-Gov activity begins on page 18.

The new Past Performance system and its points of contact are listed on page 21.

Learn about SPICE at JSC - no, it's not salt and pepper, page 22.

ISS Strategy

Responsibility under this contract will also include ISS infrastructure effort such as: configuration management, Program Board support, data management and integration, ISS unique IT applications, risk management, property management, and program support and management operations.
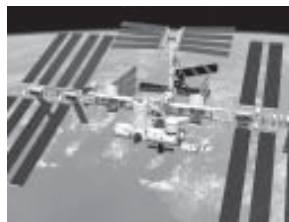
Contract 2

The ISS Mission Integration contract will be responsible for the overall management of each ISS mission – assembly, operations, maintenance, and utilization. Some of the effort under this contract includes: tactical level requirements coordination and implementation; certification of flight readiness; tactical level interface with the Research and Utilization Management Organizations; program documents management; increment and launch package management; IVA and EVA mission requirements; on-orbit configuration, requirements, and analyses; and support to US operations in Russia and Russian operations in Houston.

The four remaining contracts are the program implementation contracts. They are Cargo Mission, Payload Integration Bridge, ISS Vehicle Segment Sustaining, and Flight Equipment Sustaining and Ops. Certain ISS program efforts will still be obtained from the Center/Institutional contracts such as: EVA System, Space Flight Operations

Contract (SFOC), Consolidated Space Operations Contract (CSOC), and the Cargo and Payload Processing (CAPPS) contract.

Full and open competition is expected to be plentiful under this strategy. The period of performance of the resulting contracts is planned to be five-to-eight years including options. The ISS Procurement Office and the contract teams are working toward the award of Performance-Based Contracts using Risk-Based Acquisition Management. Contract teams just underwent training in Writing

Performance-Based Statements of Work and Risk-Based Acquisition Management. The teams are now focused on developing clear contract objectives and expressing them in terms of quantifiable outcomes. The teams are also assessing risks and developing appropriate surveillance methods.

The ISS Procurement Office released a request for information to industry regarding this strategy in March 2002. The ISS

Procurement Office has addressed comments and questions via the contract strategy website at http://jsc-web-pub.jsc.nasa.gov/bd01/excellent-strategy/. Updates and answers to industry questions were posted to the site in June 2002. All preliminary information regarding the strategy is being updated and communicated on this website for easy access by industry. A critical part of the contract strategy is that all of the individual teams interact continually as these procurements evolve to ensure that the entire ISS program scope is contained in one of the contracts, there isn't any scope missing, and there is no duplication of scope. The end result should be a more streamlined, efficient contract arrangement for the ISS program in an operations environment as well as specific accountability from contractors for requirements management under each contract. The ISS program will attempt to achieve further synergies as the program gains more operations experience throughout the life of these six contracts.

People on the Move

GRC

Congratulations: Carl Silski was recognized at a gala reception at the New England Small Business Conference, one of the two national NASA sponsored small business conferences each year. He was recognized as the recipient of the *2002 Commitment to Excellence Award* as the Government Advocate of the Year for his work in support of small, women, and minority businesses.

New Faces: Leahmarie Stervagi who started as a GSFC co-op, transferred to GRC, and was converted to a term appointment as a procurement specialist in the Aeropropulsion and Information Technology Branch.

Farewell: Gloria Rhyner retired in September. Her work ethic, intelligence, common sense, and extraordinary wit made her invaluable to the organization. We wish her well in her future endeavors. Irene Cierchacki has accepted a procurement position with the National Science Foundation in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The Procurement Office and the center will miss her outstanding professionalism.

GSFC

Congratulations: Promoted: Verron Brade, Rosa Acevedo, Leigh Anne Giraldi, Luly Carson, Michael McGrath, and Cindy Tart were promoted and joined the division management team. James Debelius, Sue Gonser, Tammy Seidel, and Steve Lloyd were all promoted as new members of the procurement management team. Other recent promotions include Michael Allen, Brenda Brady, Julie Janus, Jamiel Joyner, Sang Lee, Camille Thurston, Rebecca Wilkinson, Lashonda Goodwyn, Trina Haffelfinger, and Veronica Okai.

To Rex Elliott of Goddard Space Flight Center. Rex along with Donna Blanding (see Langley) graduated from the 2001-2002 Professional Development Program. Rex did his assignments at NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement and the Pentagon as a procurement analyst. His article about his experience at the Pentagon appears on page 10.

New Faces: Welcome Keva Crossen as a procurement technician from the Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate.

Welcome to our newest contract specialists: Nylsevalis Ortiz-Collazo, Nipa Shah, Mandy Parham, Antwan Reid, Kathy Pierson, Eric Newman, and Bryan Ball.

Farewell: Trena Mills to TSA, John Brett to HQ, Jeanne Steven to TSA, Cindy Dean to Defense, and Cheryl Brazel to TSA

JSC

Congratulations: Charles Bell has been selected to fill the new position of Source Evaluation Coordinator. Katherine Autry has been selected to head up the Procurement/Resources function at WSTF.

New Faces: Mike Ballard and Sharyn Willis have joined the Projects Procurement Office. Gail Rollins has joined the Institutional Procurement Office. Jessica Brooks has joined the Science and Analysis Procurement Office. New pricers assigned to Procurement Policy and Systems Office—John Papac rehired annuitant, Rosa Arevalo, and Joseph Campbell; plus Headquarters Intern, Joy Garnett. Rosa came from DCAA and Joseph previously worked for the Army.

Changes: Barbara Long is now working in the Shuttle Procurement Office.

KSC

New Faces: Kennedy Space Center (KSC) extends a "Heartfelt Welcome" to our newest contract specialists, Chris Canary, Attila Csoma, Tim Freeland, Chris Grubbe, Sean Howe, Teri Jackson, Edwin Martinez, and Karen Voight.

People on the Move

Chris Canary's career with NASA began with a six-month stint at Ames Research Center (ARC) under the NASA Contracting Intern Program (NCIP). Upon graduation from Michigan State University, he was transferred to KSC for a scheduled period of two years. Chris accepted a full time position at KSC, has two years of experience in contracting, and is working in the Operations Support office.

Attila Csoma comes to us from Tinker Air Force Base (AFB) in Oklahoma where he worked on the B-1 and B-2 (Stealth Bomber) programs. He received his BA from Queens College in New York, and his MBA from Oklahoma City University. Attila became a contract specialist through the Outstanding Scholar Program, and will be working in the Mission Support office on the Space Flight Operations Contract (SFOC).

Tim Freeland comes to us from the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center, Norfolk Detachment, Philadelphia where he worked on placement and administration of large dollar value service contracts. He graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Safety. Upon graduation, he accepted a contract specialist position under the Navy's Outstanding Scholar Program. At KSC, Tim will be a member of the acquisition team in the Mission Support office.

Chris Grubbe transferred in from the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Salem, Virginia. He started his career as a contract specialist intern with the VA Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management Nationwide Training Program. Chris is due to receive his B.S. degree in Management/Contract Management from Hampton University in December 2002, and will be working in the Operations Support office.

Sean Howe's career with NASA began with a six-month co-op at Dryden Flight Research Center (DFRC) under the NASA Contracting Intern Program. Upon graduation from the Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University, where he received a BA in Supply Chain Management, he was transferred to KSC for a scheduled period of two years. Sean has accepted a full time position at KSC. He has two years of experience in contracting and is working in the Mission Support office.

Teri Jackson's civil service career began in January 1999 as a Stennis Space Center (SSC) co-op. She majored in Management Information System (MIS) and received a BSBA degree in December 1999 from Southern Mississippi University at which time she entered the SSC Graduate co-op program as a contract specialist. In May 2001, she received a MBA degree from William Carey College and converted to a permanent status contract specialist. Teri will be working in the Mission Support office.

Edwin Martinez began his civil service career in 1998, when the Army Materiel Command, Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama hired him as an intern. He served as a contract specialist on a proposal evaluation team for the Blackhawk and Navy MH-60S helicopters. Edwin started his NASA career at KSC in July 2002 and is assigned to the Expendable Launch Vehicles program in the Operations Support office.

Karen Voight has 14 years of contracting experience and transferred from the Department of Veterans Affairs in Tampa, FL. Before that, she was at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Northampton, MA, facility. Karen will be working in the Engineering Support Office in Construction Contract Administration.

Farewell: Alas, we must bid farewell to Ida Ramirez and Rene Paquette. Ida has transferred to Eglin AFB, FL, which will bring her closer to her family in San Antonio, TX. After 37 years of dedicated service with Air Force, Navy, and NASA, Rene decided to retire to the beaches of Ponce Inlet, FL.

LaRC

Congratulations: Donna Blanding, who graduated from the 2001-02 Professional Development Program (PDP). The graduation ceremony was televised on NASA TV this July 25th. The Administrator

was the keynote speaker at this ceremony and presented commerative plates to the graduates. Donna did her assignment in Washington, DC, as a program analyst for the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Contracting Assistance for Women Business Owners Office (CAWBO) and as a procurement analyst for NASA Headquarters' Office of Inspector General (IG), Office of Inspections and Assessments.

New Faces (over the last year): Nicole Carnicky from the Navy is now in the Supply & Simplified Acquisition Contracting Branch, Karen Congiu from Jefferson Labs is now in the Grants and R&D Studies Contracting Branch, Randall (Randy) Johnston from the Navy is now in the R&D Programs Contracting Branch, Margaret (Maggie) Jones from the Science and Technology Corporation is now in the Procurement Operations Branch, Lionel (Lee) Nadeau from the Air Force is now in the Supply & Simplified Acquisition Contracting Branch, Robert (Bobby) Rice from the Army is now in the Grants and R&D Studies Contracting Branch, Kimberly (Kim) Seitz from the Office of Human Resources is now in the Office of Procurement (Division Office), Tianda Sherrell from the Air Force is now in the R&D Programs Contracting Branch, and Sandra Stevens from the Coast Guard is now in the Supply & Simplified Acquisition Contracting Branch. Autumn Pimperl became a full time employee in the Office of Procurement (Division Office) on June 2, 2002.

MSFC

Congratulations: To the following procurement personnel who have been promoted this calendar year: Rita Mason in the Policy & Information Management Department; Gloria Coffey, Andrea Tobias, Carol Terrell, and Debbie Matthews in the Engineering Support Department; Shirley Novy-Shue, Glen Alexander, and Sherry Davidson in the Science & Center Operations Support Department; Howard Nelson in the Space Flight Projects Support Department; and Artra House, Jennifer McCaghren, Roxanne Melton, and Lee Whalen in the Space Transportation Support Department.

New Faces: Anna Stovall, Vanessa Lindsey, Lana Fischer, and Cathy Moore to Procurement Office's Engineering Support Department; Van Jones, Tammy Balch, and Cheri Burton-McCaskey to Procurement Office's Science & Center Operations Support Department; Eunice Adams and Kellie Craig to Procurement Office's Space Transportation Support Department.

SSC

Congratulations: Promoted: Jason Edge, and Rob Harris, both contract specialists. Congratulations go to both Jason and Rob.

Susan Dupuis received the Exceptional Service Medal on September 12, 2002. We are very proud of Sue. She is well-deserving of this prestigious award.

New Faces: Rebecca Dubuisson, SSC Procurement Officer, announces the arrival of two new employees joining our staff in the September/October 2002 timeframe. They are Anita DeMarco and Beth Bradley. Beth joined the SSC team on September 8, 2002, and Anita joined our team on October 20, 2002.

Anita came from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base where she served as a team lead and warranted Contracting Officer. Prior to that, Anita was a contract manager for the State of Arizona and long-term employee of the Department of the Navy at the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center.

Beth comes to us from USDA in Louisiana. She was a Supervisory Contract Administrator at the Southern Regional Research Center and a warranted Contracting Officer. Beth also worked for the National Institutes of Health and the General Services Administration as a contract specialist.

Farewell: Teri Jackson, contract specialist, transferred to Kennedy Space Center in July. Leslie Taylor-Grover, contract specialist, departed NASA to pursue her doctorate degree at Clemson University. We already miss Teri and Leslie but are happy to have Anita and Beth with us.

Meet NASA's Inspector General: Robert W. Cobb

By Theresa Becker, OIG Procurement Analyst

Pick up a newspaper today and you see corporate executives being arrested for fraud. Unfortunately, companies committing crime is not restricted to the corporate sector. Companies and individuals try to make money by cheating or stealing from the government. That's where the IG comes in. Since 1978, the NASA

Office of Inspector General (OIG) has worked to prevent and detect crime, fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and has assisted NASA management in promoting economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in agency programs and operations.

Robert W. "Moose" Cobb took office as NASA's fifth Inspector General on April 22, 2002, following nomination by President George Bush and confirmation by the US Senate. In a formal ceremony in the NASA Administrator's office, Mr. Cobb was sworn in by the Counsel to the President, Judge Alberto Gonzales.

Mr. Cobb was previously Associate Counsel to the President. In this role, he handled the administration of the White House ethics program under the supervision of the Counsel to the President and was responsible for administration of the conflict of interest and financial disclosure clearance processes for candidates for nomination to Senate-confirmed positions. Prior to

joining the Office of Counsel to the President in January 2001, Mr. Cobb worked for almost nine years at the United States Office of Government Ethics. In this position, he was responsible for legal and policy advice in connection with all facets of the mission of the Office of Government Ethics. Prior to government service, he worked for five

years as an associate attorney at Ober, Kaler, Grimes, & Shriver.

Mr. Cobb said he is honored to have been given the opportunity to come to NASA. His enthusiasm for working at the agency is reflected in his borrowing of a rhetorical question from his eight-year-old son: "What kid doesn't like NASA?" And he believes the position of NASA Inspector General fits well with his previous legal and ethics background.

Based on his first few months as Inspector General, Mr. Cobb noted that NASA is "a special place with public servants who understand that the peculiar and inspirational NASA mission requires heightened dedication." He finds NASA employees, both within the OIG and throughout the agency, to be particularly

qualified and dedicated to their work.

In terms of future plans or direction of the OIG, Mr. Cobb said he will focus on establishing clear priorities to ensure OIG resources are used to keep the Administrator and the Congress informed of progress and problems in agency programs and operations. He stated that the OIG's priorities will track statutory mandates, the President's Management Agenda, and the NASA Administrator's initiatives. Particular issues such as procurement, safety, information technology security, and financial management will continue to receive significant OIG attention, he said.

Speaking more specifically about procurement-related issues, Mr. Cobb explained that he is a big believer in competition. He emphasized the vital role the Contracting Officer plays in ensuring that the government receives a fair deal. In his opinion, when one contracts without the benefit of competition, one had "better have a good reason."

When asked what message he would like to send out to the Contracting Officers working in the field, Mr. Cobb said, "an important part of a Contracting Officer's job is to ensure compliance with the letter and spirit of contracting laws." While he recognizes that this usually means a lot of hard work and occasional confrontation with contractors, those involved in the procurement process need to recognize that the rules are there for good reasons: to ensure competition, fair play, and protection of the taxpayer's money.

Mr. Cobb has established a procurement team in the IG's office under the direction of the new Deputy IG, Tom Howard. This team will seek to ensure that the OIG's office of Audits, Inspections, and Assessments, and office of Investigations address the most pressing procurement issues confronting NASA and ensure the most efficient deployment of OIG resources towards this end. A subset of the procurement team will develop an initiative to address procurement fraud at NASA.

With between 80 and 90 percent of the NASA budget dedicated to procurement in recent years, Mr. Cobb believes that it is essential to the maintenance of public confidence in NASA programs that the IG's office be vigilant in preventing and detecting procurement fraud, waste, and abuse.

So Long Connie

By Connie Stott, Langley Research Center

Ed. Connie recently retired from Langley. Before she left, she wrote an article about herself and her experiences.

My career at NASA began in 1970 in a temporary clerical position. When the temporary appointment was over, I was offered a permanent job in the Flight Operations Branch. I also worked in the Technical Library, the Projects Directorate, and my final assignment was in the Office of Procurement. I started

off as the Procurement Officer's secretary and a few years later, I entered a training program and became a contract specialist. My first assignment was in Simplified Acquisitions, and for a short time, I was in ADP Contracts.

After a while, it was suggested (my arm is still sore from being twisted) that I go back and finish my education. Upon completion of my degree, I became the Langley BankCard Coordinator. A few years later, I became the manager of the Fleet, Purchase, and Travel Task Order, which had been awarded to the Bank of America. This task order provided credit cards for purchasing goods and services, travel, and use of government vehicles. The program is supported by three organizations: the Office of Procurement, the Office of the Comptroller, and the Office of Management Systems and Facilities. As the

Task Order Manager, I have been fortunate in meeting many people from every center as well as people from other government agencies and private industry.

Of all my jobs, I must say that my procurement career has been the most challenging. Where else could you be reported to an end-user's Congressman? Where else could you be called at home on a Friday night at 7:00 p.m. because a trailer had been delivered and they needed a signature? Where else could you spend a goodly amount of your time with the IG? I won't list all the rest of my "experiences" in case I decide to write my memoirs. If I do, you can rest assure that many of you will be in them.

I have always been very proud to represent NASA in the credit card program. Our Fleet, Purchase, and Travel programs are held in high regard by other government agencies and private industry. The dedication of the center-level Fleet, Purchase, and Travel Agency program coordinators, as well as the finance people, are totally responsible for the success of the credit card program.

I would like to thank all of you who have helped me along the way. I will miss you, and I certainly could not have done it without you!

By the way, I was just wondering what **does** the acronym IFMP stand for??? I've forgotten!

Cheers, Connie

Slicing The Pie

By Greg Della Longa, Johnson Space Center

Ever since I can remember, I have always enjoyed a good slice of hot apple pie. Being the first born, I never had any competition for the biggest, juiciest, and most delicious piece. However, like any other good Italian family, over time there were many other siblings to follow. I soon found that I was no longer able to have just any piece, I had to compete against numerous other hungry mouths at the table, all wanting and expecting their share. Mom then added further complexity to the situation, by setting aside a piece for dad because he was working late or for one of my brothers who had to stay after school. How dare she set aside slices of the pie, didn't she know that reduces the amount of pie that I can go after? I found all of this to be extremely unfair and unreasonable; I couldn't understand why I didn't have an opportunity to select my own piece and can vividly remember asking mom, "What about my piece?"

Well, a few decades later, and as a NASA Contracting Officer, I regularly hear from contractors – in particular, small and small disadvantaged firms – that exact same phrase, "What about my piece?" In today's environment of shrinking budgets, contract consolidations, and extended periods of performance, new opportunities for smaller companies have been significantly reduced. While we have tried our best to compensate for diminishing opportunities through the establishment of socioeconomic goals and policies, most of that effort has impacted subcontracting opportunities. Thus, it is imperative that once we identify a requirement to be set aside, we solicit the best firms available that fall into that particular category.

The nature of an 8A set aside permits us to go directly to a vendor if we are confident that they can perform the effort; however, JSC rarely ventures down this path. Our mindset has been, and continues to be, to afford a reasonable number of qualified vendors the opportunity

to be considered. Thus, for new 8A set aside requirements, as well as for existing 8A contracts when the firm is graduating from the 8A program, JSC utilizes a mechanism that has proven to be highly effective and efficient in selecting a firm for contract award. The author of this process is our Deputy Director of Procurement, Debra Johnson. Throughout the years, Debra has been a champion of small business growth and development. Because of her efforts, JSC has been highly successful in our relationship with the small business community.

Working Together

Once we have identified a requirement as a suitable candidate for an 8A set aside effort, we work closely with the JSC Small Business Specialist, Billy Jefferson, and the Small Business Administration (SBA), to establish an appropriate NAICS code. With the assistance of the Small Business Specialist and the SBA, we then generate a list of firms that fall into that particular code. In preparing the list, we typically consider such items as past performance, technical capabilities, and company infrastructure.

While our local SBA office encourages us to seek primarily local firms, JSC has taken a more global approach to this process. We frequently reach out to non-local firms who may have impressed us through their initial capability presentations or site visits. Obviously, there is some pre-screening of the identified firms to pare the list down to a manageable, reasonable number. For example, on a recent 8A set aside effort, we invited a total of 11 firms to participate in a technical capability presentation.

The process entails requesting that selected firms present a strictly technical capability presentation, focusing primarily on such items as management approach, past performance/ experience (including references), project staffing plans, fringe benefit policies, and transition plans (if necessary). While all elements of the presentation are certainly important, it is imperative that the offeror demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of the work to be performed. This is paramount to any offeror being successful.

We typically place a time limitation on the presentations, which varies, depending on the complexity of the requirement and the number of firms presenting to the NASA evaluation team. The evaluation team is usually composed of procurement, technical, and budget representatives, as well as any others who are stakeholders in the requirements. The basis of the selection focuses entirely on the contractor's technical capability as demonstrated through past performance and experience, and is reinforced by what the offeror displays during its presentation. We believe it is undesirable to have 8A firms competing against each other on the basis of price, nor should price be a factor for selection.

Price? What Price?

Needless to say, this process leaves our technical comrades very perplexed as they scratch their heads and say "Now, let me get this straight,

you want us to recommend a company for selection without knowing how much it is going to cost us?" For some reason, when we reply, "Trust us, we are procurement," it doesn't always alleviate their concerns. However, we typically find that if the government does an adequate job in defining its requirements, the cost proposal usually falls in line with the government independent cost estimate. Furthermore, after selection is made, we often partner with the firm during proposal formulation to ensure there is a clear understanding of the depth and breath of the requirements.

Additionally, in lieu of waiting for the companies to request a debriefing, we attempt to be proactive and schedule the debriefings at the time of non-selection notification. While less structured than SEB debriefings, the 8A debriefings can prove to be far more beneficial and educational for the offeror.

Although, no one enjoys being debriefed on why they weren't selected, the 8A firms,

for the most part, view this as free "consulting" on what and how they can do better.

Historically, we have found that many of the small companies focus their presentations on marketing versus clearly demonstrating how they can do the job. Not only do we address the strengths and areas for improvements in their presentations, we also critique their actual presentation (style and format), which can be invaluable to them. This is particularly important to firms that may not possess experience in interfacing with the government. Overall, we believe that the debriefings have been a highly positive exchange of information that prove to be extremely beneficial in future endeavors.

While we will never come close to satisfying all of the hungry mouths that descend upon the table desiring a piece of the pie, we can attempt to do our best to slice the pie and spread the few pieces around. This is essential, especially in a time when NASA may not be baking too many fresh pies.

Langley PO and Deputy Get Supervisory Awards
Kim

Kimberly G. Stone, Procurement Officer, received the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, for fostering a renewed spirit of customer service in the Langley Office of Procurement and translating goals into results. Through her leadership of an aggressive campaign of increased internal communications and outreach to customers, Kim has achieved substantial improvements in the Office of Procurement's performance during Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001. In 2000, she established four key goals for the organization: continuing excellent customer service, developing excellent procurement professionals, maintaining quality, and supporting agency procurement goals. In 2001, she expanded the goals to include marketing procurement, educating customers, and improving lead-times. Quality throughout the organization has greatly improved, as evidenced by the strengths cited in the Procurement Management Survey Report, e.g., lead-times, outreach, report card and metrics, good morale and happy customers, and training. Through her proactive, hands-on style of leadership and her emphasis on goals and results, the productivity of the office has been greatly enhanced, and morale within the organization and customer feedback continue to improve.

A View from the Pentagon

By Rex Elliott, Goddard Space Flight Center

Every morning, I walk by the Secretary of Defense's "mess" on my way to the office. Even if I've already had something to eat, I'm still enticed by the wonderful smells of breakfast that come from there. It's surprising that Donald Rumsfeld and his staff aren't all overweight, but perhaps they're just not as susceptible to these temptations as I am. Once I even got to eat inside the "Blue Room", as it's called. The food was just as good as I'd imagined. Along with several other detailees, I was treated to breakfast there by Deidre "Dee" Lee, the Director of Defense Procurement. As part of Mr. Rumsfeld's staff, Dee gets to eat in the Blue Room, and even bring guests there. Dee used to be the head of NASA Procurement, but now she works for the Pentagon, and she's my boss's boss during my six-month assignment here.

Previously, I had been working at the Headquarters Office of Procurement as part of NASA's Professional Development Program (PDP). The PDP program required that I arrange for a "collateral assignment" before returning to Goddard Space Flight Center. The Pentagon was pretty close by, offered some challenging work assignments, and was interested in having me help out. Thus, after nineteen years with NASA, I began my first experience of working for another federal agency.

The Department of Defense (DoD) and NASA both do a lot of procurement and new technology development, so I thought there'd be a lot of similarities between the two agencies. However, the differences quickly became apparent. While these functions are central to NASA, they're only part of what DoD does. As the largest federal agency, DoD has a very complicated mission and a much more complicated organization than NASA has. I've still never seen a DoD org chart that fits on one page—maybe it doesn't exist, since the paper would have to be unusually large. Also, I thought
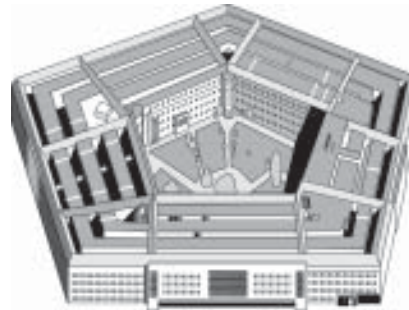
NASA was pretty bad about wielding acronyms around, but DoD seems to have advanced the state of the art. I'm convinced that people here don't really know what half the acronyms stand for—how could they, there are so many—they just keep using them as acronyms.

The Work

I work in the Contract Administration and Policy (CPA) office of the Defense Procurement (DP) organization. (Technically, these aren't acronyms, since they don't form words.) Here, I get to work with procurement legislation that affects DoD and really the whole federal government. I analyze proposed legislation, try to figure out how it affects DoD, and help the department influence what Congress chooses to pass into law. I also get to help implement legislation once it's passed by Congress. The issues are numerous and varied—sometimes I feel like a procurement jack-of-all trades. One day I'll be dealing with legislation to streamline the procurement process, and the next day I'll be figuring out how we respond to an earmark (a.k.a. pork-barrel project) for the most arcane of items. (For example, electronic locks for file cabinets that store classified materials—which just happen to be made by only one vendor in the state of Kentucky—you can guess who included that $5 million earmark in the budget.) Years ago, I chose to work in procurement because I thought it would never get boring, and that's certainly been the case here. I like to learn, and I'm really learning a lot here. Also, I get to use some of my public policy skills from graduate school. It's refreshing to combine my career field with my academic background—this usually isn't possible for most procurement folks.

I also get to do various procurement research projects here—like when a Contracting Officer from the field called desperately trying to find anyone to tell her if she could use the new procurement authorities from the FY 02 Defense Authorization bill. It's fun to find the answer to problems that affect front-line

procurement people. It's not always the answer they want to hear, but at least they get the answer quickly. Sometimes I think of a new way to get something done without breaking the rules, and that's personally very rewarding. It's so easy for the rules to stop civil servants from making progress in their work. Fortunately, the procurement rules are really fairly flexible—more than most people realize. There's usually more than one way to solve a procurement problem, and finding that new solution is one way to make a worthwhile difference.

The People

People who work in the Pentagon are called "Pentagonians." Since I came from NASA, which some consider to be the premier agency in the whole federal government, I naturally assumed that Pentagonians would be less capable, more entrenched, and with less-positive attitudes than I was used to. (Gosh, don't I sound like a snob.) In fact, one of my NASA cohorts had encouraged me to "be sure to act arrogantly when you get to the Pentagon—they're used to that." Well, here again the reality was different from what I'd expected. The people here have a lot of expertise and capability. They're good, hard-working folks, and it's a pleasure to be part of this group. I'm clearly one of the junior people here, since most of my co-workers are GS-15s or higher. As you'd expect, these people are largely self-directed, but there's plenty of opportunity for interaction and learning from them.

Since we all work in the same building, we usually go to lunch together at one of the Pentagon's several cafeterias. I don't recall ever before being part of an office that routinely takes its lunch break together, but I like it. Previously, I would just eat at my desk, usually while working at the computer, but it's a lot better to take the break. It's more *civilized* than just working straight through the day—gives me a psychological rest, and I get to know more about what's going on with my co-workers. Sometimes we talk about work, and sometimes other things, but it's still mentally healthy to take that break. I've heard it's physically healthy too, since it causes me to eat slower (something I should have been doing years ago).

The Military

The Pentagon has about 23,000 people working in it — about 16,000 of them are uniformed military. I had never been immersed in a military culture before, but there are a lot of attractive features to it.

There's a sense of community about the military—a lot of people focus their whole lives around it. There's a crispness and precision here that can be quite attractive. I like getting my phone calls returned within the hour. I also like the way orders get carried out. It's not always the best way (or even the best orders), but it's usually quite efficient. I've long thought that, if you do something quickly, even if it's not entirely correct, at least you get half of the assignment right. Conversely, if you finish something late, even if it's done perfectly, you still got half of the assignment wrong. The military seems to implicitly understand this. Of course, this is quite a difference from the way things work dealing with Congress and the legislative process.

Coming from a field center, I've found it's also pretty easy to get frustrated with Congress' collective lack of operational experience. It doesn't make sense to me that the staffers and elected representatives who decide on policy have so little hands-on experience with how policy is implemented. Still, that's our country's system of governance, so I have to work within it. I've learned that the policy people in the Pentagon (and NASA too) are protecting people like me from a lot of bad legislative ideas. After all these years of being frustrated with the Headquarters policy types, I've come to realize that they are the friends I never knew I had.

The Location

Even though I take DC's Metro train to work, I still walk at least three miles every day. That's good, because I need the

A Closer Look:
Captain Frank

By Diana Gomez, Johnson Space Center

Articulate, passionate, dedicated, and motivated are just a few of the words that describe Frank Goldston's approach to his job as Team Lead of the Prime Content Management Team in the Space Station Procurement Office. When observing Frank tackle his day-to-day tasks, you would think that he has been a Space Station Contracting Officer at Johnson Space Center (JSC) all of his life. Yet for all his experience and wisdom, he has only been working at JSC for 11 years.

After graduating from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor of Science in Photography and a Minor in Journalism, he decided to work as a professional photographer. After two years, Frank came to realize that his real interest lay in sales. Slowly his interests started drifting towards photographic sales. After 15 years in photographic sales, he decided to take the opportunity and pursue his MBA to strengthen his business skills.

While going to school, a neighbor offered Frank a part-time job in quality and productivity in a nearby chemical plant. His first thought was to decline the job because he felt he did not understand enough about the position. However, after much consideration and the yearning to learn more, he decided to take the job. This, of course, meant he had to work in the mornings and go to school in the afternoons and evenings. It also meant that he would have to spend many late nights working and studying.

A Future in Government

As graduation grew closer, Frank consulted with one of his professors as to how best apply his MBA. The professor told Frank that she believed he would have a productive future in government procurement and gave him the name and number of a top procurement official from the Department of Defense. After speaking with the official, he was given the opportunity to become a co-op.

In August 1990, Frank arrived at Johnson Space Center and began his co-op tours in contracting. His first assignment was to support Space Station Freedom for six months. His second tour found him in center operations supporting construction of facilities at JSC.

In May 1991, he graduated from the University of Houston Clear Lake with an MBA. He was also hired as a full-time contract specialist and continued to work in center operations administering service and construction contracts.

Later, Frank moved to a procurement office that supported the Mission Operations Directorate and worked on the Space Transportation System Operation Contract (STSOC). This was his first opportunity to work on a multibillion dollar contract.

Space Station

In 1993, Frank moved to the Space Station Procurement Office to support the creation of a letter contract for the Russian Space Agency. This was a very exciting opportunity for Frank because it was a $400 million contract and the first major contract with the Russians. Working side by side with the Russians was a new experience for Frank and NASA. It required employment of new and creative approaches in contracting. In September 1996, after three years in this arena, Frank took an opportunity to change jobs and began pricing and negotiating contract changes supporting the International Space Station (ISS).

In late 1998, Frank's extensive contributions to the Space Station program, along with his significant understanding of the program's goals and needs, were recognized through his promotion to team lead for the Prime Contract Management team, the job he holds today. His primary responsibility is to manage all changes activity and content to the Boeing Prime contract, which deals with the development, integration, and operations of the ISS. One of his most notable accomplishments was to move the program from a position of 111 outstanding Undefinitized Contract Actions (UCA) to only one outstanding UCA. This would not have happened without his managerial efforts and the hard work from the rest of his team. According to one contract specialist who works on Frank's team, "Frank's technical knowledge and understanding of ISS work make him extremely valuable to our group. He is one of the few

business office members who is able to talk on the same level as the engineers and works extremely well with the technical community."

Even though Frank has a very busy work schedule, he still manages to make time for his beloved hobby – sailing. He owns a 45-foot center cockpit ketch. After more than 28 years of sailing, he became a Coast Guard Merchant Marine Officer in February 1999. Frank's license allows him to operate charter vessels as a captain. He has traversed the Gulf of Mexico a number of times. His longest trip was from Belize to Galveston in a 33-foot sailboat. The trip, which took about 8 days, covered roughly 1,000 miles.

Frank and his wife enjoy sailing so much that they are owners of "Summer's Child Sailing Charters." They are also

part owners of another charter boat in Port Aransas, TX. His weekends are usually very busy sailing charters out of Clear Lake or Port Aransas. Frank's eventual goal is to become a full-time captain chartering sailing cruises throughout the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and the other seven seas of the world.

LaRC Supervisory Awards

Sandi

Sandra S. Ray, Deputy Procurement Officer, received the Supervisory Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Award. In her capacity as Deputy Director, Sandi has primary responsibility for the overall staffing of the organization. During her tenure in this position, LaRC's Office of Procurement has hired a significant number of employees with disabilities. Although the total number of employees has decreased by nearly 25 percent in the last eight years, she remains committed to disability awareness and to hiring individuals with disabilities. The office currently has 70 employees, five of whom have disabilities. Two of them have targeted disabilities. (They are more likely to be discriminated against because of the nature of their specific disability; legally blind and deaf are examples of targeted disabilities.) Sandi personally ensured that the necessary accommodations were made to provide these employees with the tools that they needed to successfully demonstrate their capabilities and to perform to their maximum capability. These accommodations were made without drawing attention to the disability being served, thus preserving the dignity and pride of the individuals involved while creating opportunities for them to excel. Sandi considers the organization's human capital to be its most valuable resource, without regard to disability, and encourages all employees to pursue both upward mobility and training opportunities. Her actions and encouragement have provided LaRC's Office of Procurement with a diverse workforce of motivated employees who work to develop their full potential.

Getting the Job Done!

The Multifaceted Career (and Life) of Ann Sharpe

By David Keith, Stennis Space Center

To the casual observer, Ann Sharpe is a talented procurement professional. She is that, and much more. Her career has taken her to industry and the federal government. Her work has touched several countries. So has she.

Ann is a senior contract specialist and Contracting Officer at Stennis Space Center's (SSC). A native of Tennessee, she now calls Mississippi home. She graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) with a BS/BA in Business Administration/Management/Economics and an MBA with emphasis in Economics from William Carey College. Ann has also completed twelve hours towards her Ph.D.

Career Highlights

Ann has worked as the Executive Secretary to the Governor for the American College of Physicians at Oschner in New Orleans, LA. Early in Ann's career with the federal government, she served in the Naval Oceanographic Office located at SSC as Supervisory Purchasing Agent in charge of the Small Purchase Section. Ann moved on to the Naval Research Laboratory at SSC serving as Contracting Officer and senior contract specialist/lead negotiator and acted as head of the Contracts Branch as needed. She was the lead contract specialist on the S.H.A.R.P.program that provided for the research and development of infrared cameras, with the ability to make photographs of land images through clouds/atmospheric haze while mounted to the underside of F-16s. These cameras are currently being utilized in flight reconnaissance over Afghanistan and provide a valuable contribution to our country.

Ann cites one of the highlights of her career as administering an R&D contract which had been awarded to an Australian firm, and directly associated with the Royal Australian Navy. Technology was developed for the Australian Laser Airborne Depth Sounder (LADS) project that was used to satisfy the US Navy's requirements for a laser airborne bathymetric system. Poor Ann had two-weeks of travel in Australia, starting in Adelaide, then to Melbourne, Carnes, and ending in Sydney.

Ann began her NASA career as the SSC procurement analyst in 1999 under then Procurement Officer Kim Stone. While working as a procurement analyst, she wore many hats. This included working as the procurement policy contact, purchase card Agency/Organization Program Coordinator for SSC, training coordinator, IFMP point of contact for the SSC Office of Procurement, and ISO 9001 representative just to name a few of her assignments.

Ann is currently working as the senior contract specialist/Contracting Officer at SSC with the Hardware Assurance Test (HAT) contract for Space Shuttle Main Engines.

Accomplishments

Ann is proud of her career and the accomplishments of the organizations in which she has worked. She has proven to be an integral part of each organization and provided outstanding abilities and leadership. Some of Ann's accomplishments at NASA include organizing the purchase card program at SSC, being an active member with the development of the IFMP program, and converting the HAT contract to a 100% Performance-Based Contract.

Ann received NASA's Acquisition Improvement Award in recognition of outstanding achievement in source selection activities and furtherance of Acquisition Streamlining initiatives. She also has received the Navy Unit Commendation Award which was presented by the Secretary of the Navy to the Naval Research Laboratory as team.

Ann states that her main challenge at work is staying on track with the HAT contract. This contract provides many opportunities to utilize her many procurement talents and leadership abilities.

Outside the Office

Ann balances her professional work life with a busy "outside the office" life. She has two daughters in college, her "third child" — her husband, and a six-year-old grandson.

She is a member of the National Contract Management Association-Mardi Gras Chapter, a member of NASA's Federal Women's Advisory Council, and a member of the Mardi Gras Krewe of Nereids.

What's it all about:
Launch Service Contracting: Hauling Mass at KSC

By Thomas D. Tokmenko, Kennedy Space Center

When my son Tom was around four years old, he asked me what I did at NASA. I pondered his question for a few moments, trying to figure out the best way to describe what exactly it is that I do in terms a four-year-old could understand. I told him I buy rockets, quite pleased with myself that I could boil down my GS-1102 occupation in three words without governmentese. Young Tom thought about my answer himself for a moment, and asked if NASA gave me the money to buy the rockets. Immediately a mental vision of a funding purchase request came into my head and I replied yes. Big Tom and little Tom seemed satisfied, and to this day I imagine my son with a mental picture of me on an airplane with a briefcase case full of $100 bills handcuffed to my wrist, like some military attaché. Of course funding isn't that easy, nothing is. But at the risk of oversimplifying, here is a short overview of how the KSC Office of Procurement expendable launch vehicle (ELV) group buys rockets.

History

In 1988, NASA was the first agency to award a commercial launch services contract. It was in support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration GOES weather satellites. Prior to that time, NASA, as well as other agencies such as the Department of Defense, purchased and assumed title to launch vehicles and related hardware.

The GOES launch services contract entailed a major organizational culture shift and was a dramatic departure from the NASA way of doing business at that time. The GOES procurement consolidated the multi-contract structure under a single contract. It purchased launch services rather than hardware at a firm fixed-price. This placed maximum financial, schedule,
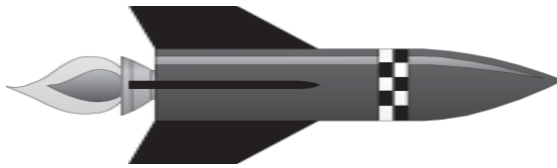
and technical risk and responsibility on the launch service provider for mission success and on-time delivery of the NASA payload to orbit.

LSTO

Another radical shift began with the Multiple NASA Launch Services (NLS) Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts. With a minimum of one launch service, these contracts were awarded in June 2000 to Boeing Delta Launch Services, Inc. and Lockheed Martin Commercial Launch Services, Inc. NASA has an initial mission set of nine launch services and may order up to 60 launch services under the NLS IDIQ contracts via the Launch Service Task Order (LSTO) process. The total estimated value of all launch services to be awarded under all NLS IDIQ

contracts over a ten-year contract period of performance, including contracts that may be awarded under an on-ramp provision, is $5 billion.

The NLS contracts consolidate what use to be several classes of launch services into a single contract mechanism for the agency. The NLS contracts are the first FAR Part 12 commercial item acquisition of launch services in the agency. They use a FAR Part 16 task order mechanism for selection and award. Because of stringent launch vehicle certification requirements for NASA high dollar value and one-of-a-kind payloads under NLS, and with NASA's highest priority for mission safety and success, the NLS LSTO process also relies upon proven FAR Part 15 "best value" techniques during source evaluation and selection. But the real "initiative" about the NLS LSTO process is that it promotes competition, shortens acquisition schedules, saves time and human resources, and reduces government paperwork.

In mid-June, KSC awarded the first competitive LSTO award under the NLS contracts. It was the first head-to-head competition between the two major domestic providers of launch services in several years. The NLS LSTO acquisition from initiation to award took just over six months to complete, or around one-third of the typical procurement lead-time for a multi-million dollar

Hauling Mass

(continued from previous page)

government acquisition of this type and complexity.

The competitive nature of the LSTO process resulted in a substantial price reduction from NLS not-to-exceed prices. Since the competitive negotiated acquisition is conducted between NLS contract incumbents or multiple task order contract awardees, synopses, market surveys, pre-award site visits, technical capability assessments, pre-proposal conferences, and pre-solicitation exchanges with inexperienced contractors (though necessary and often useful under normal circumstances) do not encumber the NLS LSTO process.

Unlike past acquisitions, conducting separate SEBs and awarding individual contracts every few years for one or two missions are now replaced with a more efficient acquisition process. Minimum contract requirements for award of a NLS IDIQ contract ensure that only demonstrated, technically proven launch service providers with the right stuff and corporate know-how compete to launch NASA's mission critical payloads. Paper rocket companies and brokers need not apply. A responsible balance has to be struck between the virtues of genuine competition and the public trust. In short, multiple task order awards create a kind of qualified bidders list. The LSTO process runs like a mini-SEB but without much of the formality and baggage associated with these lumbering institutions.

The RFP

The NLS LSTO Request for Launch Service Proposal saved industry proposal preparation time and money and reduced the amount of paperwork necessary to submit an offer. The NLS LSTO RFP did not require extensive technical and cost proposals from offerors but enforced a modest page limit of 50 pages for the technical discussion and 15 pages for the past performance discussion.

This is a reduction in proposal size of 80 percent from the original NLS solicitation. After the initial award, past performance evaluations, for example, need only consider the time elapsed since the last LSTO acquisition and past performance evaluation, rather than looking back several years. The NLS LSTO RFP also did not require certified cost and pricing data, but relied on the competitive forces of the marketplace and price analysis to ensure fair and reasonable prices. A model contract modification was included as part of the RFP, consistent with and conforming to the NLS contracts, as revised, and returned as part of the signed offers.

The Team

This single LSTO award of launch services is the culmination of work of many dedicated individuals from the NLS Source Evaluation Board (SEB), planning and laying the groundwork for this procurement. It is the first evolutionary step in the acquisition of launch services in over a decade.

A lean LSTO team responsible for this milestone event consisted of key members of procurement and the ELV project office at KSC, as well as legal and representatives from various technical disciplines.

The LSTO team requires less manpower since the Contracting Officer serves as both LSTO team manager and Source Selection Authority. An ELV project representative also serves a dual function as both technical lead (COTR) and Mission Integration Manager, coordinating mission requirements with both the ELV Program, Flight Planning Board at Headquarters, and spacecraft project. The technical lead draws upon the already established mission integration team at KSC for the requisite skills and expertise. Other ELV project representatives may serve as part-time evaluators or consultants on an as-required basis.

The NLS LSTO team was able to eliminate the use of a formal source selection plan, mission suitability scoring, and adjectival ratings or a color-coding scheme. It replaced them with a simple and

straightforward identification of risks. The evaluation process applied the definitions set forth in FAR 15.001 where applicable (e.g., deficiency, weakness). The LSTO evaluation and selection process was based on a best value tradeoff process where all evaluation factors, other than price, when combined, are approximately equal to price. Protests were not permitted. Formal debriefing of the unsuccessful offeror was replaced with an informal round table lessons learned discussion with both the successful and unsuccessful offerors, with an eye towards improving the LSTO process for future LSTO competitions and awards.

Now that the first LSTO competition is over, it has to be labeled a success. It is has been an exciting experience. And while I don't have a briefcase stuffed with $100 bills, I do have the satisfaction of working on a ground-breaking way to buy rockets. The LSTO is working. The National Launch Service is working. And while it may not mean money in the bank (or handcuffed to my wrist), it means rockets in the sky.

Pentagon

exercise. I walk almost a mile just between the Pentagon's Metro station and my office. That's longer than it used to be, because of the additional security procedures following the September 11th attacks. Given that over 184 people died here on September 11[h], I don't complain about this. I've noticed a certain seriousness about the people who work here. That's understandable because many of them had co-workers who died when the plane hit the building. I guess I'd be pretty serious too, if I had experienced that.

The Opportunities

Who I see and what happens here can be really exciting. One day at lunch, I saw Donald Rumsfeld eating just a couple of tables over. I didn't get to meet him, but I have met several dignitaries since coming here—some from Congress and some from foreign countries. I'll always remember walking into the men's room and seeing 20 or so Russian army officers there ahead of me.

The Future

Soon, I'll be returning to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. During the course of my sabbatical, I've decided that space science is important to me. I want to help NASA discover if there was ever life on Mars as well as whether there are any Earth-like planets outside our solar system. Maybe we'll someday learn if there are other intelligent beings in the universe. It's pretty neat to be living just when these questions are seriously being asked and may soon be answered. That's part of this "Age of Astronomical Discovery" we live in. I want to do more to make it happen.

I've really enjoyed my time at the Pentagon—learned a lot and did all sorts of interesting things. However, I've been away from Goddard a long time, and I'm ready to go home. Of course, with all that's happened, I've changed quite a bit. I'm not the same, and Goddard won't be either. Like the poet said, I should expect to "come back home, and see it again for the first time."

Ann Sharpe

Ann is an alumni of the USM Dance Team where she performs with the Dixie Darlings each year at homecoming. She does this with one of her daughters who is a current and active member of the team.

Ann and her husband work as part-time antique dealers. They also own and operate a Tree Farm south of Auburn University in Alabama.

Ann states that she is especially proud of raising her two daughters. She also takes great pride in working on giving life back to a fifteen acre 1890 Victorian house on Bayou Latarre in south Mississippi which she now calls home.

We at SSC are very proud of Ann and are thankful that she is a part of the NASA Team.

An Integrated Acquisition Environment:

By the Office of Procurement E-Gov Team

The President's Management Agenda (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/mgmt.pdf) lays out an aggressive strategy for improving the management and performance of the federal government. One of the agenda goals is to expand an emerging eGovernment environment into one that accelerates improvements in effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service. Concerted efforts began in August 2001, under the sponsorship of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) "Quicksilver" initiative. That initiative was an intensive two-month multi-agency effort that ultimately recommended twenty-four "e-gov" initiatives (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/egovstrategy.pdf).

Long before Quicksilver, NASA and its NAIS "pioneers" had taken a leading role in migrating early Internet successes, such as the Electronic Posting System, to the rest of the federal government. With our extensive experience and interest in developing federal-wide business practices, we were willing and eager to support Quicksilver. The initiatives were grouped into four distinct areas: government to business, government to citizen, government to government, and internal efficiency and effectiveness (IE&E).

Since the conclusion of Quicksilver last fall, our focus has been directed at IE&E projects. The goal of IE&E is to improve the performance and reduce the cost of federal government administration by using e-business best practices in areas

such as supply chain management, financial management, and knowledge management. Several projects were initiated under the IE&E initiative to develop an Integrated Acquisition Environment. The federal working group's vision is "creating a secured acquisition environment for government, businesses, and citizens that facilitates and

supports cost-effective exchange of information, goods, and services."

Within Code HC, analysts are involved in four distinct and ongoing IE&E efforts. To paraphrase a popular television series: "These are their stories."

BPN/CCR – Karl Beisel

The Business Partner Network (BPN), although new to the federal acquisition vernacular, has had a long and storied introduction. The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system began as a DoD program that assigns unique identifiers to DoD contractors. Assigned numbers include variations for each contractor payment office, thus providing the benefit of unique and consistently used identifiers for each business unit. Contractors with multiple operations in multiple locations can have multiple CCR identifiers distinguishing each location.

Initially, NASA joined DoD's CCR initiative using the same system (a consistency approach) to assign identifiers to its contractors (and to other government offices) as part of the Integrated Financial Management (IFM) program. This approach allows IFM to identify each payment office with an identifier consistent with DoD's identifier (and the multitude of other federal agencies that rely on the CCR system).

Typically, any new large-scale system experiences problems and NASA's CCR efforts have not been exempt. The IFM team has had to create temporary "dummy" CCR numbering for situations where valid CCR numbers have not been established. In time, such problems will be resolved. To keep CCR users up-to-date,

NASA has an informational website that provides instructions and help in problem resolution. There is a list of frequently asked questions and answers. The FAQ website (http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/CCR_FAQ.html) includes many links to virtually all CCR related data. The CCR registration site can be accessed at http://www.ccr.gov/.

Improving Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness

NASA's use of the CCR system is still evolving. There have been some glitches, particularly in establishing identifiers for very small contractors, and in some cases, other government offices with which NASA has interagency agreements. Such issues are being addressed government-wide by an interagency group hosted by GSA. Tentative plans project that OMB will direct all federal agencies to be registered in CCR by August 2003.

As the federal government continues to evolve using electronic commerce, the CCR system is evolving with it. CCR is becoming a part of a larger federal information sharing system – the "Business Partner Network." That larger system will eventually include CCR vendor registration information and more contrac-tor-specific information, including past performance and debarment history.

eCatalogs – Ron Crider

A new system called eCatalogs, or "eCat" is cur-rently comprised of two phases, with a third under consider-ation, but not yet approved by OMB. The first phase, which procurement professionals will see in late fall or early winter, is the Government-wide Contract (GWAC) and Mul-tiple Award Schedule (MAC) Web Index. The index will capture and display, in one place, key and standardized information for shared con-tracts government-wide. The main goals are to simplify

buyer selection decisions and to better leverage government buying. A Federal Acquisition Regulation change (Case No. 2001-030) is pending.

The second phase, which will follow in about twelve to eigh-teen months, is in the require-ments collection and definition stage. Phase two will provide a

consolidated platform from which buyers can search out products and services across the government, sort by several modes, compare, purchase, pay for, track, and provide feedback on performance, etc. all from one website.

Hopefully, both phases will seem familiar to NASA procure-ment professionals because they build on our own successful concept of shared contracting called the Consolidated Contract-ing Initiative (CCI). If you have not visited CCI for a while, I invite you to do so now. It can be found on the web at http://procurement.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/cci/first.cgi. Getting acclimated to shared contracting concepts and their benefits now will help ease the transition which is coming soon.

FAMIS – Bill Childs

The Federal Acquisition Management Information System (FAMIS) is a web-based system

under development for collecting and reporting procurement data from all federal executive-branch agencies. It will replace the antiquated Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) currently in use. It will allow for collection of more data in a timelier manner with a much higher degree of accuracy than under FPDS.

The current FPDS process is very slow. Within NASA, as in many agencies, each field instal-lation collects its own data, which is combined on a monthly basis at Headquarters. The process of obtaining, loading, combining, and verifying the data usually takes 10 to 14 days after the end of each month. A file is then generated and sent to GSA, where it is loaded and verified before being combined with other agencies' data. By this time, an individual transaction may be two months old. Also, the original data entry at the centers is mostly done manually. This can result in typing errors and HQ data requirements being misunder-stood.

While FAMIS can accept batch files just as FPDS does, it will also allow real-time direct entry from field installations for each individual transaction. Further, it will be geared to accept automated transfers of data from agency contract writing and reporting systems; thus, for example, IDGS could be set up to automatically record information about your contract based on which clauses you select, and could feed that information into FAMIS (and IFMP) without any

E-Gov

manual intervention. Similarly, IFMP could automatically report the contract value and other data. FAMIS will accept partial data and store it in a holding area until it is complete.

FAMIS will permit some tailoring to meet individual agencies' needs and can restrict access to designated data elements. This could eventually result in all AMS data elements and reports being transferred to FAMIS, although not in the initial rollout of the system. If this comes to fruition, NASA procurement personnel and the public would have instant, on-line access to procurement data. This in turn could substantially reduce the data calls Headquarters makes to the centers.

The functional specifications were issued for agency comments in March 2002. More than 400 comments were received. An interagency team (which NASA participates on) reviewed and dispositioned the comments in April 2002. A draft solicitation was issued in June 2002. Again, more than 400 comments were received from industry and were reviewed in August. A final RFP is expected soon. If all goes well, FAMIS could be in operation by October 1, 2003.

Standard eTransactions – Ken Stepka

If one of the goals of the Integrated Acquisition Environment initiative is to create a simpler, common, integrated business process for buyers and sellers, then all roads eventually lead to standard eTransactions. Without this "lingua franca," it would remain difficult, if not impossible, to integrate the wide variety of systems available today. There would be little incentive for agencies and departments to stop developing their own systems and share existing tools and services.

The interagency eTransaction team is deconstructing the federal procurement process down to a mutually agreed upon transaction level. This enables the team to reach an understanding about the common steps and roles. A follow-on task will map these steps to existing systems. Agencies can then see where common information is collected and begin to standardize data elements, naming conventions, and business rules. This data will also be shared with vendors that develop business systems, including contract writing and management systems. Common data elements should lead to the development of commercial systems that can more readily share data.

Contractor past performance data is a high-potential area for standard transactions and sharing information, hopefully within a limited number of databases. As agencies develop a higher confidence level and understanding of currently available data, they should be more willing to populate and access a shared past performance system.

In summary, the OMB's Quicksilver activities are diverse and challenging, especially those associated with the procurement process. These projects are not quick fixes, but systematic approaches structured to take advantage of existing services whenever possible. They will make the electronic government more accurate and effective. We will provide occasional updates as these initiatives continue to evolve. The Office of Procurement remains committed to initiatives such as these designed to improve performance and to support our customers. Shared services, coupled with Integrated Financial Management systems on the horizon, will support a business process with timely and accurate data, while avoiding costly and unnecessary duplication of business services.

The New Past Performance Retrieval System

By Yolande Harden, Headquarters Contract Management Division

The federal Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) became effective on July 1, 2002, and is available to all source selection officials across the federal government. It is sponsored by the Department of Defense E-Business Office and administered by the Naval Sea Logistics Center Detachment Portsmouth. The system is a web-enabled application that allows the retrieval of contractor past performance information. It is also a central repository for performance assessment reports received from the four recognized federal collection systems, which are: the National Institutes of Health Contractor Performance System; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Past Performance Database; the Army's Past Performance Information Management System; and the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System used by the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Defense Logistics Agency, and other defense agencies.

The purpose of PPIRS is to assist federal acquisition officials in purchasing goods and services that represent the best value for the government. Contractors also have access to their performance information contained in the database through Central Contractor Registration.

NASA procurement and source selection personnel may gain access to the system through "gatekeepers" designated at each center. Access is obtained by requesting a PPIRS government logon account at www.ppirs.gov. The center gatekeeper is notified of the request, reviews the application, and grants access to the system. The following is a list of center gatekeepers:

Center	Name	Email Address
ARC	Basta, Mike	mbasta@mail.arc.nasa.gov
ARC	Brown, Jeff	jsbrown@mail.arc.nasa.gov
DFRC	Medina, Robert	Robert_Medina@mail.dfrc.nasa.gov
DFRC	Toberman, Rosalia	Rosalia_toberman@dfrc.nasa.gov
GRC	Shuman, Bruce	Bruce.M.Shuman@grc.nasa.gov
GRC	Mensurati, Ernest	Ernest.C.Mensurati@grc.nasa.gov
GSFC	Behnke, Wanda	wbehnke@pop200.gsfc.nasa.gov
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SPICE

By Wayne C. Buckley, Johnson Space Center

Some might think that SPICE is what Marco Polo found or what we use on our foods. Well in this instance, SPICE is neither. SPICE stands for "Space Program Integrated Contract Environment." In keeping with the proud tradition of the federal government, an appropriate acronym had to be developed. Our first inclination six years ago when SPICE was initially developed was to call it SPUD or "Space Program Utilization Database." We even thought that we could use Mr. Potato Head as our logo. Unfortunately, and to my great disappointment, appropriate license agreements could not be reached and therefore we ended up using SPICE.

What is SPICE? SPICE is an integrated, relational database program that manages approximately $18B worth of NASA contracts. These include contracts in the International Space Station Office, Space Shuttle Program Office, Space Communications and Data Systems Office, and as of late several large institutional contracts that are managed at the Johnson Space Center. Users include Contracting Officers, contract specialists, technical managers, and resource managers at NASA Headquarters, Goddard Space Flight Center, Marshall Space Flight Center, Kennedy Space Center, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. SPICE manages the data that is necessary for contract, resource, and technical personnel to manage their respective contracts. When SPICE was developed the main focus was data reliability and building a system that benefits the users.

Many times, in both industry and government, systems are foisted upon the user community without any input or thought to how the system will be ultimately utilized. Developers of systems like to build source code, but it is the end user that is the most critical, yet often overlooked, entity. The

development of SPICE included significant input from the users and they remain a valuable source when new reports are to be generated and refinements to the system are identified.

The SPICE system has over 70 modules for each contract. Some of these modules are:

1. Action tracking
2. Conformed contracts
3. Automated evaluation system from CCO issuance to definitization and award
4. Audit tracking and resolution
5. Cost reporting and integration
6. Automated Configuration Management System
7. Contract invoice tracking and accounting
8. Automated correspondence control (allows for the automatic pulling of numbers and letter generation)
9. Automated approval of documents
10. Tracking of all modifications, Engineering Change Proposals and Requests for Engineering Change Proposals.
11. Ability of contractor to view and input data into the system based upon a certain requirement:
   a. For configuration management dollar and contractual impacts
   b. For Task Orders
   c. For Change Order status
   d. For Cost reporting
12. Automatic disbursement of reviewable items
13. Award fee evaluation and compilation

Although these are just a few of the modules in SPICE, one aspect of the system that needs to be clearly identified is that we have security which protects the documents. This system is Internet based. (Microsoft Explorer is the browser of choice). Every step has been taken in the system to reduce, not eliminate, a significant amount of paperwork that has to be created. At the same time, it allows individuals at their desktops to view and retrieve documentation and reports/analysis that are part of the system. In doing so, we have made it possible for our dwindling civil servant staff to be more productive in performing analytical work rather than trying to organize or find documents or data.

Data Integrity

SPICE is the official repository of all official documentation for the contracts which are in the SPICE system.

Data calls that are received from NASA Headquarters or Center/Program/Project Management are collected from SPICE thereby decreasing the response time and ensuring the accuracy of the data. The SPICE system, like all other systems has to have as the main objective "data integrity." Otherwise, users, and ultimately the system, will not serve the needs of the customers.

Because this is a relational database, the data is entered into the system one time. It is then up to the users to identify the products (reports) that they expect the system to produce. These reports, although built using the software Crystal Reports, can be downloaded into more conventional documents such as MS Word and Excel. This capability allows the users to download reports and to manipulate the data to serve a particular need they might have without the necessity of having software coding performed. The system also allows for automatic e-mail notification and reminders of action items, documents to be reviewed, change board requirements data, etc. Allowing automatic e-mail notification provides for a fail safe; reminding organizations and/or individuals that certain items are in the system for their review/comments, etc.

IFM?

One of the questions that are regularly asked is, "How is SPICE different from the Integrated Financial Management (IFM) system?" First of all, SPICE is significantly different from IFM. IFM is a commercial, broad-based system which will ultimately consolidate all the agency's financial data. SPICE on the other hand is unique in that it handles the day-to-day issues and management of multiple contracts. Specific reports have been developed to fit the needs of each Program/ Project, which SPICE supports. These are tailored to the needs of the specific manager. In addition, since a majority of our users are distributed among all of the NASA centers, we also try to integrate all reporting requirements so that each NASA center can obtain reports. Each Program/Project has its own requirements coupled with differing styles of management. SPICE allows for the flexibility of manipulating data to meet those distinct needs. As IFM becomes more institutionalized, SPICE will be integrated into the IFM system and will augment that system. Data entered into SPICE or IFM will be available on either program because an electronic "bridge" will be built in SPICE to connect the two systems to avoid entering data twice. SPICE is intended to compliment not compete with IFM. The integration of the two systems will significantly enhance current agency practices as they relate to business/contractual and technical management of contracts.

With the significant support of personnel at JSC, SPICE is now being integrated into other large JSC contracts. This is a vision that leads us down the road to e-commerce and the ability to manage our contracts from our desktops. Nothing will replace face-to-face communications, but the utilization of SPICE as it is integrated into IFM will certainly catapult JSC into the new vision that the NASA Administrator has embraced.

If you would like to know more about SPICE, please contact Leigh Allen, the task manager. She can be reached at (281) 483-4106 or by e-mail at d.l.allen1@jsc.nasa.gov.

Marshall Procurement Office Recognizes Personnel at Awards Celebration

Marshall's Procurement Office held its annual All Hands Meeting and Awards Celebration on July 18 at Ditto Landing. Several employees were honored for their accomplishments and dedicated service. Procurement Office Director, Steve Beale, opened the meeting with a hardy welcome and introduced several new Procurement Office employees to their coworkers. The introductions were followed by a rousing rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" sung by Kathy Rice, a contract specialist on the Flight Projects Team. The theme of this summer's Procurement All Hands Meeting was "Summer Work and Play with Health and Safety in Mind." In keeping with this theme, Steve Corgett of the American Red Cross demonstrated CPR and gave the group safety and health tips on how to beat the summer heat.

The following awards were presented: Twenty Year Service Award – Elaine Hamner and Dennis Parton. Dangerous Display of Initiative Award – Stan McCall, Vann Jones, Mike Sweigart, and Walt Melton. Going the Extra Mile Award – Marianne Campbell, Penny Battles, James Bailey, Steve Morris, Beth Ewing, Rita Mason, and Jane Maples. Great Attitude Award – Carol Terrell, Lana Fischer, Jeannette Swearingen, Thelma Collins, Ketela White, Venus Fletcher, James Young, Mike Sosebee, and Terry Jones. Practicing Good Values Award – Becky LaRue, Roxanne Melton, Terry Wilkinson, Melinda Dodson, David Brock, Tammy Balch, Sam Gonzales, and Dwight Clark. Safety Awareness Award – Kathy Blevins, Ron Smith, Kathy Rice, Glen Alexander, and Betty McCown. Peer Awards - Gloria Coffey, Kim Newman, and Sandra Johnson.

A "Dessert Delight Contest" took place after the award presentations. Before the desserts were devoured, five lucky judges had the difficult task of selecting first, second, and third place winners from among several luscious entries. First place went to Terry Ware, followed by Eunice Adams in second place, and Lana Fischer in third.

Joseph Hobson coordinated the All Hands Meeting with the assistance of an enthusiastic group. In appreciation for their help, Hobson presented commemorative plaques to the group for helping him make the event a success. In spite of the heat, both civil servants and contractors in attendance agreed that the team sports and other activities were enjoyed by everyone and helped to build team spirit within the Procurement Office community.

MSFC Annual Honor Awards Ceremony

During the MSFC 2002 Annual Honor Awards Ceremony held in July, several MSFC Procurement Personnel were honored:

NASA Exceptional Service Medal – Byron Butler
NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal – Betty McCown
NASA Certificate of Appreciation – Sandra Presnell and Carlos Smiley
MSFC Director's Commendation – David Iosco and Earl Pendley
MSFC Certificate of Appreciation – Glen Alexander and Lydia Butler
Group Achievement Award – the Propulsion Research Laboratory Special Test Equipment Procurement Support Team consisting of Marlyce Alexander, Alice Sams, Kim Day, Betty Kilpatrick, Penny Battles, Roxanne Melton, Artra House, and Ron Smith.