



Procurement Countdown

Winter 2006/07 No. 132

The View from Mockba

By Karl Beisel, Business Manager; Space Station Office, Russia

Most NASA employees are aware that we have a Space Station Office in Moscow. But it's a small operation off the radar screen for most Center procurement offices (excepting JSC). The office has a cadre of procurement types, headcount: one. The size of the operation, its remoteness, and its unique situation make this arguably the most interesting procurement job in the Agency. The dynamics of the position are far reaching personally and professionally and include elements of life that you might never have considered.

We write small contracts here, always in English and Russian. Most of our smallish budget is spent on housing and on launch and landing related contract activities for the Russian Soyuz vehicle. We assist JSC procurement on the larger contracts. Fortunately, with our one-person contracting team, the procurement staff experts at JSC support us, too. Moscow time is nine hours later than JSC making a short daily window of communication. Almost all discussions and negotiations are through interpreters (we have some of the best). My position here is technically the Business Manager. It's a combination of a CO and a cost analyst job that requires think-outside-the-box and get-things-

done skills. I am on call always. If the phone rings at night, it's time to go to work. We receive a lot of excellent support from the Moscow-based employees of Tech Trans International. Most are Russian, and they are super!



Karl Beisel with Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union.

Probably the most significant adaptation needed for Russia involves language. Most Russians speak only Russian. I had some language instruction at JSC that was helpful. Here in Russia, our administrative office is composed of only four people... two Americans and two Russians. So I hear Russian much of the day and have added to my small vocabulary of words and phrases.

The job here is one of the most interesting I've ever had. But life in Moscow is pretty interesting too. In some ways, it is very different; in some ways, very similar. Walking to work is the norm (about a mile each way). Remember older relatives telling

stories about walking to school through the snow? We do it here... a mile each way sometimes on windy days at 20 degree below zero! You arrive at work "very awake!" But the summers are nice.

Moscow is a city of pedestrians and mass transit (there are lots of cars, too). If you blend in, you'll be asked for directions. This happens to me routinely.

Unfortunately, 24-hour translators aren't one of the perks of the job. So there is a need to communicate at least enough to say in Russian, "I'm sorry, I don't speak Russian." In stores and shops, I have to communicate in Russian (this is often combined with pointing). The most important phrase to learn is "I would like Coca Cola Light" – the Russian term for Diet Coke. A few other interesting aspects: Normally I carry only Russian money; our Russian TV service includes "The Discovery Channel" in English! Moscow (pop. 11 million) is geographically relatively small as the city is very vertical with many tall buildings.

Some adventures I never dreamed of have been realized in my time here. I have stood on Red Square, which I remember from long-gone televised parades. I visited Saint Petersburg and toured the palaces of the Russia

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A Message from the Editor We're Back!

After a two-year hiatus, the *Procurement Countdown* is back.

This is a larger than normal issue. It includes some events that are going on currently. You will also find within these pages some things that would have been printed earlier if we had not had a break in production (including many changes you will find in People on the Move). Check out Steve Parker's article on his experience as a Congressional Fellow from 2004 and Rex Elliott's article on his procurement work with FEMA after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

While I am the editor of the *Procurement Countdown*, I do not do this job alone. There would never be a *Procurement Countdown* without the Center Points of Contact. They are:

ARC: Gary Heagy

DFRC: Brian Bowman

GRC: Nikki Brown

GSFC: Rex Elliott (who had done the job for years) and Olivia Gunter (who is taking over from him)

JSC: Rosalie Carpentier

KSC: Dave Reeves

LaRC: Tom Weih

MSFC: Jerry Williams

NMO: Rebecca Wilkinson

SSC: David Keith

NSSC: Joseph Lewis

This will be the first issue for more than half of the POCs. The others have been with the *Countdown* for a number of years, some for over ten years.

The POCs have the tough job of finding people to write assignments. They follow up with the writers to get the articles in on time. Then, they make sure that the right person at the Center has approved the article. They work hard to submit the approved articles by my deadline. Once they send the articles to me, I work closely with the POCs to deal with changes and issues that come up. Some do every time we put out a newsletter. The role of POC is not the most fun job for them. It is not the job with the highest priority, either. Still, every time we start work on a new *Procurement Countdown*, I know that they will deliver. Thank you all. I could not do it without you.

Susie Marucci
Editor

Moscow

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Czars. I spent one weekend in Kiev (in the Ukraine).

The most exciting thing that has happened (so far) was when I was assigned as a "working guest" at the U.S. Embassy's July 4th party. It was an outdoor event. I could hardly believe it when I saw former President Gorbachev socializing and hobnobbing like the rest of us. He was gracious and accommodating, as you can see in the photo.

This whole experience has been great. Being in Moscow and working with talented, highly capable people (Americans and Russians) is for me the adventure of a lifetime!



People on the Move

ARC

The Ames Acquisition Office has gone through significant changes over the past year and a half with the selection of a new management team, numerous retirees, and a number of promotions.

Congratulations: To the new management team – The Ames Acquisition Division is now being led by Dee Morrison, Procurement Officer; Gary Heagy, Deputy Procurement Officer; Marie Dorish, Branch Chief for Center Operations and Space; Kelly Kaplan, Branch Chief for Aeronautics; and Jill Willard, Branch Chief for Business and Policy. The new management team has their work cut out for them as they continue to support current contracts along with the Center’s new initiatives — all while implementing a reorganization within the Division. The goal of the reorganization is to better align our limited resources with the support needs of the Center and provide opportunities for people to engage in new work assignments and gain additional skills.

Congratulations to the following individuals who were recently promoted: Kelly Kaplan, Jill Willard, Robert Guerrero, Mike Hutnik, Jeff Brown, Christine Munroe, Natalie LeMar, Veronica Llamas, Audrey Guerra, Hanan Kim, Marianne Shelley, AnJennette Rodriguez and Steven Yee.

Farewell: The Ames Acquisition Division said farewell to numerous individuals during the 2005 and 2006 calendar years, mostly because of retirements. These individuals had made

Farewell Russ

Russell H. Davis, Procurement Officer at the NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, retired on January 2, 2007, after 40 years of Government service. Russ started his career in the U.S. Air Force. After being discharged, Russ joined the U.S. Army as a civil servant holding various positions – rising through the ranks from procurement assistant to supervisor. In 1984, Russ joined NASA working at the Ames Research Center as a contract specialist. In September 1988, Russ was selected to become the Chief of the Acquisition Management Office at NASA Dryden Flight Research Center. Russ held this position until his retirement. Everyone at NASA DFRC wishes him good luck and Godspeed in his retirement.



significant contributions to the NASA mission and had been members of the NASA family for numerous years. Those 2005 retirees included Connie Cunningham (Ames Procurement Officer from 2002-2005), Tom Kolis (Small Business Specialist), Mike Basta (the Ames MIS/ Database guru), and Grace Ann Weiler (Administrative Specialist). Those 2006 retirees included Daryl Wong (Division/Branch Chief), Gene Moses (Acquisition Strategy Manager), Rosa Tonarelli (former Policy Officer), Beverly Mesa (Administrative Assistant), and Harold Herstedt (General Engineer). Harold had 64 years of Federal service – most of them with NACA/NASA. Additionally, Cheryl Williams left Ames for Southern California as she joined the NMO workforce and Mary Perez left to pursue a private sector opportunity. We miss these individuals immensely but wish them good luck in their new endeavors.

New Faces: We would also like to welcome two additional members to the Ames Acquisition team – Janessa Langford and Robin Wong.

DFRC

Farewell: Louann E. Beu transferred from the DFRC Acquisition Management Office to

become the DFRC Liaison to the NSSC.

GRC

Congratulations: Congratulations are due to Ronald Matthews and Leahmarie Stervagi who both received promotions earlier this year. Mr. Matthews began his career at NASA GRC as a co-op student in 1982 and converted to a full-time employee in 1984. During his 24 years, he has worked on a number of machining and fabrication contracts and was recently assigned as the Contracting Officer for the Nuclear Reactor Decommissioning Project and the B2 Test Facility Rehabilitation Project, both at Plum Brook Station.

Ms. Stervagi also started her career with NASA as a co-op student at the Goddard Space Flight Center in 1999 and moved to GRC 18 months later. She has worked on a number of large projects and currently serves as the ODIN Lead Contracting Officer for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD), as well as the CO for the Technical, Facilities Operation, Maintenance and Engineering (TFOME) contract. She is also the CO for the Agency-wide

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The **People on the Move** column only includes those names that were submitted to the *Procurement Countdown*. If you know people who should be listed in this column, contact your center *Procurement Countdown* point of contact, or send the names to the editor, Susie Marucci, on (202) 358-1896, or via e-mail at susie.marucci@nasa.gov.

People on the Move

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NASA Contractor Assurance Services (NCAS) contract. Both Matthews and Stervagi are members of the Contract Management Module (CMM) facilitators team for GRC in which they assist members of the division with the transition from SAP. They have both demonstrated a continued commitment to support the procurement mission, the mission of the Glenn Research Center, and above, all the mission of NASA.

We at GRC are proud of the accomplishments of these two Contract Specialists and look forward to their continued success!

GSFC

New Faces: GSFC has welcomed 23 new employees in the past year, bringing our total procurement workforce up to 190 employees. Some have actually been around a while (on job details, as stay-in-school students, etc.), but the majority are new hires to GSFC and NASA.

In our Space Sciences Procurement Branch, we welcome Sherry McGee, Claudia Canales, Amy Aqueche, Tamika Seaforth, and Makara Howard. In the Earth Science Procurement Office, we are happy to have Pamela Henderson join our organization. Our Mission Enabling Procurement Office is pleased to welcome Melissa Moore, Bruce Tsai, Sherika Wilson, Candis Edwards-Duncan, Nadja Hardy, Janicea McCree, and Jennifer Lamonte. Our Institutional Procurement Office welcomes Leslie Brooks, and last, but not least, our Headquarters Procurement Office welcomes Adeola (Lola) Kellum, Andrea Davis, Rachel McIntyre, Amanda Kreusch, Teresa Brown, Debbie Knox, David Boon, Richard Pak, and Wanda Moore.

On the division's management team, we welcome back Jim Becker and Tom Russell, both of whom returned to GSFC from NASA Headquarters. Our thanks to all of these individuals who are helping to keep GSFC procurement the strong and vibrant organization that it is.

HQ

Congratulations: Mary Stevens received the Silver Snoopy award in recognition of her outstanding work supporting the launch of the Integrated Enterprise Management Program's Contract Management Module. Celeste Dalton, Lou Becker, and Monica Manning were recipients of 2006 Headquarters Honor Awards. Diane Frazier has been chosen for the upcoming SFA Launch Honoree event. Bravo to our outstanding staff! Congratulations to Sheryl Goddard and Deborah O'Neill. They were chosen as the directors for the Program Operations Division and the Analysis Division, respectively.

Farewell: Rita Svarcas transferred to the Office of Program and Institutional Integration at HQ. Tom Russell returned to GSFC, and is now the Deputy Director of Procurement. Kim Dalglish moved back to GRC and is working in the Office of the Center Director. Ron Lentz went to MSFC. Karl Beisel went to work for the Space Station Office in Russia (see the article on the front page). Michelé Hull accepted a position overseas with the Department of Defense. Last year division directors Anne Guenther and Scott Thompson retired, as did Harold Nelson and Tom Sauret. Each of these individuals left a big whole in our organization.

New Faces: Joining the Office of Procurement from other parts of NASA are Jeff Lupis, NMO; Mary Petkoff from GSFC; Donald Moses from the OIG at HQ; Ann Sharpe from the NSSC. Joining us from outside the Agency are Ronald Backes, Cheryl Robertson, Leigh Pomponio, and Veronica Lansey. We are very, very glad to have all of you with us.

KSC

Congratulations: The KSC Procurement Office (OP) reorganized in support of (what else?) a major reorganization at KSC. A new office in OP was created to support the new Engineering Directorate at KSC. As a result, a lot of people were moved and took over lead positions. Mitch Colvin was selected as the office chief. Mitch has as leads Tim Pugh (moved from the Policy Office) and Rechea Hutchinson. Rechea recently reported back to duty at KSC after working at JSC and locally in the private sector. Steve Craig was selected as a lead in our Expendable Launch Vehicle Support Office. Roger MacLeod and John Vondenhuevel were selected as leads in our Mission Support Office. Connie Wilcox is now the KSC Small Business Specialist replacing David Wansley who retired. Filling the vacancy as the Chief of the Procurement Policy and Review Office is Laura Rochester. Linda Adams was selected as a lead in our Procurement Policy and Review Office.

Farewell: Barbara Powell, Donna Rafferty, Learnette Matus, and Gloria Marsh retired at the end of 2006. We wish them well and they will all be sorely missed.

New Faces: KSC Procurement has been very lucky in picking up many wonderful new employees including: Mike Euziere, Shea Gaudart, Lester Howard, Steve Peterson, Kimberly Sweep, Patricia Hyland, Karen Griffin, Erik Whitehill, Donna Stubbs, Amy Dupertuis, Jessica Paglialonga, Lourdes Brown, Tony Caruvana, and NCIPs Kari Cezat and Rogelio Curiel.

JSC

Congratulations: Delene Sedillo was named Manager of the Projects Procurement Office. Greg Della Longa is now the Deputy Manager. Chuck Riley and Kristi Fryer were recently promoted to team leads in the Projects Procurement Office. Caroline Root was promoted to a team lead in the Exploration Systems Procurement Office

Irene Garcia was chosen as one of 45 participants from across the Agency for the Foundation of Influence, Relationships, Success, and Teamwork (FIRST) Program. FIRST is part of NASA's strategy to strengthen technical excellence and prepare leaders.

Stacy Houston was chosen to participate in the JSC Fellowship Program; allowing her to attend graduate school on a leave with pay status for one year.

Farewell: Ginger Darnell retired in November 2006. Ginger had 30 years of Government service—26 at JSC. Ginger started her career at JSC as a buyer in small purchases and ended her career in procurement as the Associate Director of Procurement. On the way, she served as the Branch Chief in the Center Operations Directorate, as a Policy Analyst in the Lunar and Mars Exploration Office, and as the Contracts Integrator in the Constellation Program Control Office.

Tom Neeley retired from the Space Station Procurement Office on January 3, 2007. Tom had 30 years of Government service, 27 of those years with NASA. Tom also worked at MSFC and KSC. Tom is moving to his beautiful home in the magnificent Hill Country just outside San Antonio to enjoy plenty of rest and relaxation.

Richard L. Rodriguez retired after a long career with NASA.

Mike Lalla left after a long career at WSTF to work for Lockheed Martin. Seena Mathews transferred to the U.S. Marshall's Office. Jessica Niebuhr transferred to the U.S. Air Force. Eric Lewis left to pursue other opportunities.

New Faces: David M. Waterson, David C. Nayles, Perry Lamar Mueller, and Sheela Logan join the Projects Procurement Office; Elijah Williams, Kirby Condron, and Nichole Bernal join the Institutional Procurement Office; Janet Arkinson joins the International Space Station Procurement Office; and Brad Niese and Misti Moore join the Exploration Systems Procurement Office.

Changes: Sharon Delp accepted a position as the Contracts Integrator for the Constellation Program Control Office. Sharon formerly served as Manager of the Shuttle Procurement Office.

Other: The Center awarded its first Award Term Contract for the Occupational Medicine Occupational Health contract. The Projects Procurement Office awarded a NASA Research Announcement for Ground Base Studies in Radiation Biology, its first in several years

LARC

New Faces: Welcome to the additions to our office, some came recently. Some of them came a little while ago. Laurie Avery came

to LaRC in January 2005 from Ft. Eustis, working for the Department of the Army. Laurie currently supports the Business Management Branch.

LaShonda Jacobs Terry came to LaRC in September 2006 from GSFC and is currently supporting the Center Operations Branch. LaShonda was a NASA Contracting Intern Program (NCIP) intern.

Mike Kaszyca came to LaRC in September 2006 from GSFC and is currently working in the Center Operations Branch. Mike was an NCIP intern. Charles Wingate came to LaRC in March 2006 from the Air Force and is currently working in the Center Operations Branch. Tim Cannella came to LaRC in March 2006 from Jefferson Laboratory and is currently supporting the Research and Projects Branch. Connie Buffin came to LaRC in January 2006 from the Aviation Safety Office and is currently working in the Office of Procurement. Cedric Mitchener came to LaRC in August 2005 from Shaw University in Raleigh, NC, and is currently working in the Research and Contracting Branch. Cedric was an NCIP intern. Octavia Hicks came to LaRC in January 2007 from Edwards Air Force Base, where she worked as a Contracting Officer. Octavia currently supports the Center Operations Contracting Branch.

Farewell: Elizabeth Underwood was a price analyst who retired after 27 years of service with the Government. Liz came to LaRC in February 2005 and worked in the Pricing Office. Mozetta Edwards worked at LaRC for 29 years. She now works at the NASA Management Office in

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Reflections of a Congressional Fellow

By Steve Parker, Kennedy Space Center

(ed. This article was written in April 2005 and submitted to the Procurement Countdown shortly before the newsletter went on hiatus. Since then, Congress has received some very bad press and a major shift in the players. We felt this article might bring some balance as well as a fascinating perspective.)

If there was just one thing that I learned from spending a year on Capitol Hill in the Office of Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) it would be thank the people for the honor of serving them during historic times and share with them the excitement of working in Congress. Okay that's two things. In reality, I learned a whole lot more.

I arrived on "the Hill" shortly after President Bush announced the new Vision for Space Exploration. I was eager to push this idea, as I personally agreed that the time had come for a new vision and that it was time to explore beyond low earth orbit.

My assignment as a Congressional Fellow began inauspiciously when, as I got off the Metro at Union Station one morning, I overheard someone talking about finding "raisins." I didn't understand until the Capitol Police sent me home and I got the real story on the news that Ricin, a toxin, was found in a Senate mailroom. All the Senate office buildings were closed, and the staff had to improvise. This was the first (and not the last) evacuation of Capitol Hill I would experience.

Our office relocated to the Senator's "hideaway" in the basement of the Capitol, as well as the Florida House, A.K.A the Florida Embassy, and remained open for business. This was my crash course in navigating the maze of passageways in the Capitol.

LOOKING IN FROM THE OUTSIDE

My assignment as a Legislative Aide (LA in Hill parlance) focused on Science, Technology, and Space, of which at least 80 percent of my time was spent on NASA issues. As a subject matter expert, I tracked current events and developments as they pertained to the Agency, including the budget cycle, Appropriations, Industry and Academia



efforts, Presidential Directives (yes, the whole new Vision for Space Exploration), and Authorizing Legislation. Collateral duties included meeting with constituents and lobbyists, preparing press releases, answering press inquiries, drafting speeches, writing official letters to agencies and departments, prepping the Senator for hearings and meetings, building coalitions, drafting legislation, and amendments, etc.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of this assignment was balancing my advocacy for the Agency with the criticism that comes from the oversight role of the Legislative Branch. Ultimately, I served at the

pleasure of the Senator and pursued his interests to the best of my ability. To the best of my knowledge, I did not cross any lines that would have put the Agency in a bad light or otherwise offend NASA management. (Well, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.)

I learned about recess (formerly my favorite part of elementary school) and how Congress goes back to their home states and districts to hear about their constituents' concerns. When Congress members took an unexpected recess for the funeral of President Reagan, I witnessed another historic event. This was marred by another evacuation of the Capitol complex, when the Governor of Kentucky's plane strayed into restricted airspace with a malfunctioning transponder. It was a rather chaotic scene, with police officers imploring people to run because inbound planes were two minutes away from crashing into the buildings. The lessons of September 11, 2001, are burned into the memory of DC workers.

ELECTION

I was lucky enough to witness the events leading up to the election of 2004. As a political novice, I was generally aware of the candidates and issues. But once there, I saw firsthand how political junkies would ponder the issues

and fates of candidates in obscure locations, like the 10th Congressional District in PA, knowing a win here or there could tip the balance of power in an evenly divided Senate, or close the gap in the House.

The aftermath of election night 2004 was even more interesting. Senator Nelson was not up for re-election. But being in a Democratic office, you could feel the sadness and disappointment in every corner. Senator Nelson himself quickly moved on and established a working relationship with republican Senator-Elect Martinez and vowed to unite for Florida's interests.

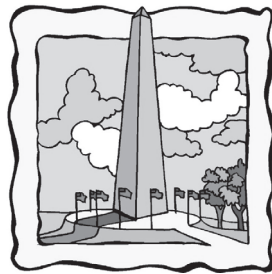
One such interest was recovery from the devastating Hurricane season of 2004. After Charley cut a swath of destruction from Punta Gorda to Daytona, Senator Nelson was on the Senate floor daily asking for emergency supplemental appropriations to help the state recover. Subsequently, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne pummeled Florida and caused significant damage at the Kennedy Space Center. All of Senator Nelson's staff was dedicated to assessing the impact of the storms and developing cost estimates for recovery. I was charged with gathering damage assessments from NASA. We were successful in securing \$126 million in emergency appropriations to repair hurricane damage at KSC.

X PRIZE

Also in the fall of 2004, a little company called Scaled Composites proved that commercial entrepre-

neurs could achieve space flight, by reaching the edge of space over the Mojave Desert and winning the Ansari X prize. Consequently, Congress took up legislation called the Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act of 2004, to streamline some of the regulations that commercial companies will follow.

I was able to work with some incredibly talented individuals. I



wrote an Op-Ed piece with Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese, an instructor at the Naval War College, on the merits of international cooperation in space exploration. Unfortunately, events such as the Florida Hurricanes and election bumped publication beyond the point of having timely impact. I chalked it up as another lesson I learned in congressional affairs.

Perhaps the most interesting things happened in my final weeks as a Congressional Fellow. One of these events was the arrival of the Shuttle's External Tank at KSC. I accompanied Senator Nelson to KSC and escorted him through some status briefings, impromptu meetings with KSC employees, a visit with Commander Eileen Collins and the crew of STS-114, and a press conference.

A NEW LEADER

When NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe announced his resignation, Senator Nelson asked me to gather information on potential candidates to succeed Mr. O'Keefe. Senator Nelson's position on the Senate Commerce Committee is key to the confirmation of the next NASA Administrator. Early on, we discussed qualifications and suggested to the White House, the name of a gentleman whose education, business experience, NASA experience, and scientific expertise would be paramount to the success of the NASA Vision for Space Exploration. I had met Mike Griffin and found him very down to earth. He was adept at explaining complex technical theories and data in a way that novice space junkies (like me) could understand. I set up a meeting between Dr. Griffin and Senator Nelson that went exceptionally well – if only the White House would nominate him.

My final event as a witness to history was the Inauguration of President Bush for his second term in office. It was quite a scene with mobs of supporters and protesters converging on the city. Security was at an all time high, and the ceremonies were largely peaceful.

Alas, my Congressional Fellowship came to an end, and Dr. Griffin was indeed nominated by the White House and confirmed by the Senate for the position of NASA Administrator. I look forward to his leadership.

(ed. Senator Bill Nelson was reelected to Congress this past November.)

Orion: The Next Big Step

By Keith Hutto, Johnson Space Center

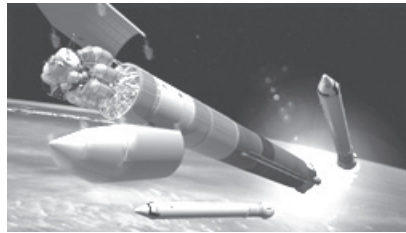
“NASA selected Thursday Lockheed Martin Corp., based in Bethesda, MD, as the prime contractor to design, develop, and build Orion, America’s spacecraft for a new generation of explorers.”

With that press release, NASA’s first major hurdle to fulfilling the Nation’s Vision for Space Exploration was crossed. The Crew Exploration Vehicle (officially named “Orion”) acquisition represents one building block in a future-exploration architecture system being developed to support the nation’s vision of embarking on a robust space exploration program that will advance the nation’s scientific, security, and economic interests.

On March 1, 2005, the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate (ESMD) at NASA Headquarters released the first phase of a two-phased solicitation. On June 24, 2005, NASA awarded two contracts for Phase 1 of what is now the Orion Project. The Orion acquisition strategy was a multi-phased project. Phase 1 called for the contractors to mature their crewed vehicle designs and demonstrate their ability to manage the cost, schedule, and risk of human-rated spacecraft development. Phase 2, covering final Orion design and production, was scheduled to start with a down-selection to a single industry team in 2008.

At the same time Phase 1 contracts were awarded, the ESMD management made significant decisions effecting the contract administration. The first decision was to move the Constellation

Program and the Orion Project offices to the Johnson Space Center (JSC). The second decision de-scoped the Phase 1 effort reducing the period of performance from 6/24/05 to 12/31/08 to a new performance period from 6/24/05 to 3/31/06. This reduced the period of performance by 31 months and approximately \$1B. In an amazing feat, the procurement team was successful in defintizing



both contract actions in a record 11 days.

After a very long and successful task of awarding the Phase 1 Orion contracts, the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) team detailed at NASA Headquarters was disbanded and the members returned to their respective Centers. Instead of a needed break of rest and relaxation with family and friends, members became part of the JSC rapidly-formed Procurement Development Team (PDT). Its job was to begin development of the Phase 2 acquisition strategy. Those of you who have participated in major acquisitions know that completing the procurement process is, at times, very daunting. Add to this a compressed schedule and you might question your sanity for wanting to be a part of such a team. The PDT was formed in late July 2005 with a scheduled down-selection to a single contractor and

award of the Phase 2 contract in March 2006. In addition to the schedule, the output of the SEB was dependent on release of the Exploration System Architecture Study.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

The PDT quickly formulated an acquisition strategy to accomplish this aggressive schedule. The Orion acquisition, being a phased acquisition using progressive competition down-selection procedures, allowed the SEB the ability to capitalize on lessons learned and efforts completed during the Phase 1 selection process. The solicitation contained three evaluation factors, Mission Suitability, Cost/Price, and Past Performance. Under the Mission Suitability factor, four subfactors were identified: Technical Approach, Management, Safety and Health, and Small Disadvantaged Business Participation. A unique feature of the solicitation included an evaluation of Life Cycle Cost (LCC) under the Mission Suitability subfactors of Technical Approach and Management. By evaluating LCC under both subfactors, the SEB was able to access both technical tradeoffs and management approaches to LCC. This later proved to be an invaluable tool.

The cost/pricing approach required each offeror to include an Excel Pricing Model (EPM) as part of its cost proposal. Each EPM was developed and integrated to facilitate changes to source data such as direct labor hours and/or rates overhead, and General and Administrative rates. It was also

developed to compute the total impact of various changes to both cost and price. Each EPM workbook consisted of individual templates that vertically summed up cost data. This provided consistency in data and cost evaluations. EPMs were developed to support the proposed contract structure as described in the contract structure section below.

The SEB approach to past performance utilized the assessment by the Performance Risk Assessment Group (PRAG) during the Phase 1 evaluation process. In addition to the assessment provided in the PRAG report, an assessment of contract performance during Phase 1 was also performed by the SEB. This assessment included any past performance information that was identified by the SEB.

CONTRACT STRUCTURE

The awarded contract is structured into three distinct schedules to support Program and Project goals and to allow maximum flexibility for the project:

■ Schedule A is the Design, Development, Testing, and Evaluation (DDT&E) of the Orion Project. This schedule also includes production of the first flight modules, Block 1A and Block 1B variants (ISS Crew and ISS Cargo). In addition to the completion form contract structure for DDT&E, this schedule contains a small Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) effort for operation support and the initial flight spares. The performance incentive for Schedule A utilizes the NASA Award Fee for End Item Contracts.

All interim award fee evaluations are based on specific project milestones.

These milestones were selected based on the critical path and meeting the ultimate goal of first Orion flight modules. The award fee dollars associated with each milestone is based on the value of the milestone in meeting project goals and schedules. The overriding tenet of award fee structure is to encourage the companies to meet project goals of schedule and costs. While Schedules B and C are part of the complete Orion acquisition strategy, currently they are unexercised options within Schedule A. The estimated value of schedule A is \$3.885 billion, with a period of performance of 9/8/06 to 9/7/13.

■ Schedule B is an IDIQ contract type for the production units of the Orion. This schedule allows NASA to separate the design and non-reoccurring costs of Orion from the production and reoccurring cost of the Orion units. A unique feature of the Orion design approach is the reuse of the Orion. We coined the phrase “new and refurbished Orions.” Schedule B is structured for production of new Orion units and, where appropriate, the refurbishment of Orion units for reuse. Any effort authorized under this schedule will be by issuance of individually negotiated delivery orders. The period of performance of Schedule B, including options, runs from 9/8/09 to 9/7/19 with an estimated cost of \$3.528 billion.

■ Schedule C is an IDIQ contract type for the sustaining Engineering and Operation Support of the contract. This schedule will support the sustaining of the vehicles and

other ground support functions. Any effort authorized under this schedule will be by issuance of individually negotiated task orders. The period of performance of Schedule C including options runs from 9/8/09 to 9/7/19 with a not-to-exceed cost of \$750 million.

Sincere thanks is owed to all of the individuals, especially the core voting members of the SEB, who spent countless nights and weekends reading and evaluating proposals in preparation for moving NASA into the next generation of space exploration. The SEB is grateful to the JSC Procurement Office for its flexibility in supporting the Orion Phase 2 activity. This often meant short notice and quick turn-around of reviews and feedback. The good news is the high standards set by the board resulted in a top-quality product for the Source Selection Authority to review. While the activities for the Orion proposal were centered at JSC, the Orion effort received support from across the Agency. Each participating NASA Center provided high quality inputs and support that lead to the success of the procurement.

The Orion will carry human crews from Earth into space and back again. Coupled with the launch vehicles, transfer stages, landing vehicles, and surface exploration systems, the Orion will serve as an essential component of an architecture that supports human voyages to the International Space Station (ISS), moon, Mars, and beyond, then safely back to Earth again. It is truly exciting to be part of NASA today.

Working Together to Support Orion TPS

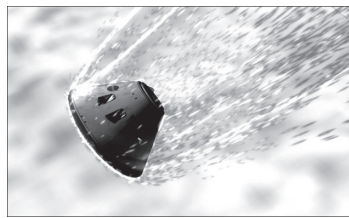
By Ronnee Gonzalez, Rachel Khattab, and Marianne Shelley, Ames Research Center

In mid-2005, a requirement was submitted by a technical organization at Ames Research Center to purchase material samples for testing. This seemingly straightforward commercial purchase was the beginning of an intense and challenging technical, procurement, and legal effort across multiple Centers and Headquarters. The goal – to develop a heat shield for NASA’s Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV), now known as Orion. The Thermal Protection System (TPS) Advanced Development Project (ADP) was established to address risks associated with the development of a TPS heat shield capable of protecting the vehicle during atmospheric entry from both the Low Earth Orbit - return and Lunar Direct Return - missions.

Orion is a critical component in the Vision for Space Exploration, and will serve as the primary crewed space vehicle to the International Space Station, as well as to the moon and, eventually, to Mars. The heat shield provides essential thermal protection during return to Earth. The TPS ADP, which is managed at ARC, directly supports the Orion Project Office at Johnson Space Center. The ADP is a highly collaborative effort, bringing together technical expertise from ARC, JSC, Langley Research Center (LaRC), Glenn Research Center (GRC), Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Kennedy Space Center (KSC), and Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC).

As ADP procurement requirements were defined, it became clear that coordination with Orion procurement and legal would be beneficial. A weekly telecon was set

up by the Orion attorney, Scott Barber, which included Orion project office managers and contract specialists at JSC, the ADP Project Manager and attorneys and contract specialists at ARC. Discussions initially focused on strategy, timing, and transitions. Then, the team began to understand how the ADP procurements would tie into the Orion prime contract.



MANY HANDS

JSC procurement managers and contracting officers Katherine Autry, Caroline Root, and Susan Starkweather provided valuable advice and many hours of support, reviewing acquisition strategy plans and RFPs as well as discussing key issues. Intellectual property (data rights) and organizational conflict of interest topics were discussed at length with them and various legal counsel. The team tackled these issues in a true One NASA fashion – all members presenting their own opinions, hammering out their differences, and coming to consensus. LaRC procurement managers and staff Rosemary Froelich, Susan McClain, Panice Clark, Deborah Ford, Sharon Hare, and Tim Cannella joined in the effort when they were tasked to procure carrier structures for the ADP. The weekly telecon expanded to include procurement and legal folks working on other advanced development efforts for Orion. Many common

issues surfaced and a great deal of useful coordination and collaboration has taken place. Now that much of the procurement activity has moved into the administration phase, the telecons are held monthly or as needed, for special topics.

The TPS ADP procurements are divided into Block 1 and Block 2 based on Orion Low Earth Orbit and Lunar Direct Return mission configurations. To date, ARC has awarded contracts for TPS Block 2, Phase I and Phase II and TPS Block 1, Phase I. RFPs for Block 1 Phase II and Alternate Block 2 Risk Mitigation are in the final stages of development. LaRC awarded contracts for carrier structures for material coupons and for manufacturing demonstration units. A delivery order was placed by ARC against a BPA awarded by Doris Wood, GSFC Contracting Officer, to establish a CEV TPS Project Implementation Review Team to support the ADP. Support service contracts at several NASA Centers (including ARC, LaRC, and GRC) have also been tasked to provide support to the ADP.

SHARING INFO

Communication and collaboration have been essential, during this busy year working ADP procurements. To facilitate communication, the team has made extensive and effective use of numerous communication tools, including telecons, NASA’s Integrated Collaborative Environment (ICE) (Windchill), and WebEx to share and exchange time-critical information.

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Stennis's Procurement Officer: Sue Dupuis

NASA Stennis Space Center's (SSC) Susan Dupuis is the Acquisition Management Office's Procurement Officer. A native of Louisiana, she still calls Louisiana home and lives in Slidell, but works and has close ties to Mississippi.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Sue's Federal career started at Marshall Space Flight Center where she worked as an administrative support specialist for the solar heating and cooling department. This office had many Apollo engineers who made a lasting impression on Sue regarding the pride and tenacity of NASA employees. Sue then worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in its human resources, accounting, and procurement offices. She came back to NASA at the National Space Technology Laboratory (later renamed SSC) where she worked as a lead contract specialist/Contracting Officer. She continued up the ladder serving as the Federal Women's Program Manager, an Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor, and a Center Settlement Official. She now serves as the Procurement Officer.

One of Sue's earlier career highlights was her participation with a procurement and finance team to set up the beginnings of the reimbursable federal city structure, which SSC currently hosts and which serves as a model for other agencies.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sue is proud of her career and of 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 Sue's recognition at NASA include the Space Flight Awareness Award, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal, and the Outstanding Federal Civilian Employee for the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



CHALLENGES

Before Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Louisiana, Sue's main challenge at work was strategically aligning her organization with the Center's reorganization. The other part of that main challenge was preparing her workforce with the skills needed for a changing business environment, including those in system administration and financial/resource management. This continued to remain a challenge. However, everything changed in September 2005.

After Hurricane Katrina, Sue re-focused her efforts on the basic needs of her employees (physical and mental), helping to get them essential supplies early on and to rebuild their lives. Many of the procurement workforce had homes that sustained major damage, or they totally lost their homes. She was also faced with the difficult task of recruiting and retaining procurement professionals while

the ravages of Katrina were still present. The SSC had lost a good portion of its procurement workforce because of retirements, employee deaths, and transfers to the NASA Shared Services Center. Despite these challenges, Sue did it.

More than sixteen months have passed since Hurricane Katrina. Today the Acquisition Management Office (AMO) at SSC is now strategically reorganized to better serve its customers and is fully staffed with highly skilled and educated procurement professionals. All AMO employees, except two, have moved back into their homes.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Sue balances her professional work life with outside activities. She is very proud of her family and of the fact that she is a new grandmother of a beautiful baby girl. She has a daughter who recently received the Teacher of the Year Award, a son who recently graduated from college and is now in the Marine Corps, and another son who graduated from West Point. Both sons are scheduled to be deployed to Iraq next year. Sue points out that she has a devoted husband who has made it all possible.

Sue is a member of the National Contract Management Association-Mardi Gras Chapter, a member of the Chamber of Commerce Alumni Association, and a member of Toastmasters International. She is active in her church and likes to read historical and adventure novels.

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

Teambuilding: Creating the Office WE Wanted

By The NASA Management Office

Have you ever been sitting in your office and thought, "Gee, things could be so much better if we just made some obvious changes - but nobody ever talks about it?" Or, "Why doesn't management ever ask us about the best way to do our jobs - don't they respect our opinions?" And how about, "We could do things so much better here if we just worked more as a team?" It is probably safe to say that we have all felt that occasional sinking frustration that things could be better in our office - if people would only talk about what's going on. We would be hard pressed to find anyone who doesn't support the concepts of "creating a team vision" or "building communications in the office." But, how many of us have worked in an office where there has been a specific and formal initiative to not only create an office vision, but also to develop an implementation plan to make it happen?

Well, we took these questions and ideas to heart at the Contracts Management Section (CMS) of the NASA Management Office (NMO). For the past two-and-a-half years we've been working to strengthen our team and refine our business methods, using a formal process with an Organizational Development (OD) consultant. As a small group of contract specialists and support staff with diverse backgrounds and experiences, our team started this process to improve interpersonal communication, streamline operations, and define shared goals for the future of the office. We also wanted to devise ways to better leverage the strength and versatility of our group. As a result of this process, our team developed mission and

vision statements, created a team values statement, and devised a comprehensive implementation plan to monitor and achieve our goals. The process that we used to improve our communications and define our goals was tailored for our particular needs and specific desired outcomes. However, our overall experience can provide a framework for others to use in making their office more value-added, more cohesive, and more satisfying for their team.



SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the eight steps that we used in our process:

1. Requested OD Support:

Since the NMO is actually a part of NASA Headquarters, we requested assistance from our NASA Headquarters personnel office in finding an outside consultant to help us determine where we currently stood as a team and how to build an office vision that will work now and will go forward.

2. OD specialist conducted one-on-one interviews and climate survey:

In order for the OD specialist to gain an accurate picture of the overarching concerns of the team, she interviewed each member of the staff in person. She also administered a written survey, to gauge trends and the degree to which specific areas of concern

were felt in the group. This survey is the baseline assessment being used to monitor the progress of our team.

3. Established an internal CMS team to facilitate the OD specialist's efforts:

A five-member team arranged meetings with the OD consultant and tracked the closure of action items that flowed out of each meeting.

4. Held two off-site retreats for team-building activities:

From the retreat meetings we agreed on a wish list of general goals, including:

- More say in our role as a Headquarters office
- More respect from our customers
- Greater alignment within our team
- Improved office dynamics
- More serious recognition as a value-added unit
- Greater personal pride in belonging to a respected office within the NASA community

5. Held a series of on-site visits with OD Specialist:

We worked to craft a mission statement (description of what we do) and vision statement (where we want to go). To assess our environment going into this part of the process, we used the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis technique.

6. Established a Values Statement:

After an in-depth conversation on individuals' approach to work, and how those approaches affect the office dynamic and functionality, our team committed to these core values:

- Professional Growth and Development (e.g., create cross-training opportunities, establish mentorships, enroll in formal

classes, begin brown bag luncheon sessions)

- Diversity (e.g., acknowledge the value of differences within the office and provide open environment for dialogs)

- Work standards (establish Standard Operating Procedures)

- Teamwork (e.g., create schedule for annual off-site retreat, summer picnic, holiday celebration, etc.)

- Workplace Environment (create schedule to ensure office safety, cleanliness, etc.)

7. Using the Values Statement to guide the development of an Implementation Plan for the vision, we:

- Developed a list of actions to close the gap between where we were and what we wanted, using our CMS core values.

- Established a volunteer leader for each action within the office, including a general plan on how goals will be accomplished.

- Provided a once a month opportunity for the volunteer leaders to brief the staff on the status of their action area.

8. Drafted a “bridge” planning document: Although the rest of the NMO organization was not initially part of our efforts to develop a vision and implementation plan, we always knew that their involvement was a real necessity. So it was a big plus when our new NMO Director took an immediate interest in our initiative, and asked us to build a “bridge” planning document to grow our vision beyond our immediate team and to extend our efforts into the rest of the office.

All retreats, activities, and meetings for team building involved voluntary participation by staff members. The OD consultant and the Procurement Officer worked to ensure that all of the staff could participate and have their ideas heard in all meetings. There were no management mandates or predispositions for how this process would roll out for us. As a result of this “grass-roots” approach, we feel a stronger sense of ownership and accountability for the success of this process.

REAL LIFE: HOW'S THE PROCESS WORKING?

Specific feedback from us to the OD consultant provided after our most recent teaming session included: better understanding the role of perception and interpretation in human interaction; increased ability to handle misunderstandings; improved ability to communicate more openly; and decreased defensiveness – not taking offense so easily, not taking things personally. As a result of the teambuilding sessions and retreats, individuals feel greater confidence in their interpersonal communication skills. This has translated into more open communication in the office and improved team dynamics. These skills have proven critical to our successful management of many major internally- and externally-driven change initiatives throughout the organization.

Based on our commitment to this process and the implementation plan that we designed, we hold ourselves accountable within our CMS team and the larger NMO. We maintain a continued emphasis on succession planning and movement toward our mission and

vision goals. Despite several setbacks, we have developed a sense of purpose as a unique and value-added business unit within NASA. We have more fun, have greater respect for each other, and (almost) enjoy work!

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE? WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Is there anything stopping you from suggesting that your group or office do a “check-up” on your team’s health? How about brainstorming some suggestions to make your workday a little more enjoyable and productive? Maybe you can pin this article on the boss’s door when she or he isn’t looking! We suggest instead that you take a deep breath and talk directly to your boss and coworkers about finding your own way forward.

Remember that leadership in the organization can come from all levels. As Franklin Roosevelt once said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Fear, and of course, whatever that is growing in your office refrigerator...

An observation...
When we looked at the office environment, it was amazing how little things could make a big difference, and how “airing the laundry” in a positive way could create a big improvement. An example? By just getting a group consensus that the office refrigerator should not contain stranger life forms than what we are hoping to find on Mars, the team determined that a positive work environment should extend to cleaning the refrigerator on a regular basis. This may be a small thing in some respects, but in other respects, it reinforced the basic concept that everyone should take equal responsibility in keeping our office clean and taking care of what matters to the team.

Sean Howe: Have Warrant Will Travel

By David Reeves, Kennedy Space Center

If you haven't met Sean Howe yet, chances are good that you will. With only a few years at NASA under his belt, Sean Howe has seen a lot of KSC and a lot of the Agency. He has called both Dryden Flight Research Center and Kennedy Space Center home, and frequently travels to Huntsville to work on the Agency Contract Management Module (CMM) Team. You may have seen him at Hagerstown and Wallops – he has been to both locations for training classes. Best of all, he's ready to go on a moment's notice. When Hurricane Jeanne hit in 2004, he was asked to perform year-end system activities in Huntsville, since that location wasn't in the hurricane's path. He packed up and left on two days notice, though we know his heart was here with us!

Sean is a member of the NASA team working in the KSC Procurement Policy and Review Office. He's been in the office for three years supporting the Integrated Financial Management Program and the SAP, the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation, and Contract Management Module (CMM) systems. Most recently, he has been a part of the CMM implementation team of which he has been a valued member and has done a great job.

THE LONG ROAD

The route he took to get KSC is worth looking at. He was born in Lake Tahoe, CA, and his family relocated to St. Johns, Michigan (which is just north of Lansing). Sean dreamed of being a part of NASA as a child. He was fascinated by the idea of being part of exploration. He also decided early that

he wanted to work for an organization that benefits humanity.

In order to realize his dreams he went to Michigan State University, where he majored in Supply Chain Management. He lived off campus and he met another future NASA employee there, Chris Canary. Sean joined the NASA Contracting Internship Program



(NCIP) and did a co-op rotation at Dryden where he was a Contracting Officer. He briefly lived in the town of Boron, which he equated to the desert town in the Kevin Bacon movie Tremors. He returned to Michigan State and graduated. Then, Sean came to KSC with the NCIP. After about fifteen months, he was picked up as a full-time employee.

Sean is very interested in the launch and processing activities here at the Center and has been to many of the operational areas. While in a buying office, a technical customer invited him to be part of a small group that did a safety walk-down of pad 39B where Discovery was being prepared for the launch for STS-110. He has participated on the KSC Tiger Team, which assists with crowd safety at the viewing sites during several orbital launches. He spreads his enthusiasm around, recently providing some of us desk jockeys great pictures of a rollout of Discovery.

LOVING THE GAME

Sean is not all work and no play. He enjoys mountain biking, camping, hiking, and outdoor activities. Yes, there is mountain biking here in Florida. He likes to participate in sports and watches his favorite teams. He participates in the KSC softball leagues, his last team being the Spacers. His favorite teams to watch are, in the following order, Michigan State Spartans (Basketball), the Detroit Redwings (Hockey), the Detroit Tigers (Baseball), the Pittsburgh Steelers (Football), and then the Michigan State Spartans football. He really likes ice hockey and supports the Tampa Bay Lightning. He attended some of the games on their way to win the Stanley Cup a few years back. Despite taking part in a number of leisure activities and attending many exciting events, Sean says he still has many things to experience. A couple of personal goals include skydiving and learning to fly a plane.

Sean has enjoyed his experiences with NASA. He says he really loves his current job – supporting procurement systems and working with and helping people. He has learned patience and teamwork while he has been here and has benefited from having some great mentors and team members. He says he always feels welcome at NASA. He realizes that his journey is just starting. His goal is to continually improve and to face more challenging tasks, whether they are here at NASA or in his personal life. We hope that he stays with us for a long time.

Commercial Orbital Transportation Services A Use Of The Funded Space Act Agreement

By James W. Bailey, Headquarters/Johnson Space Center

NASA's use of Funded Space Act Agreements (SAA) for the Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) program has received wide acclaim and garnered a considerable amount of attention. Many, hearing about COTS for the first time, think commercial-off-the-shelf, but this COTS involves the innovative use of the Funded SAA. Funded SAAs are not new nor were they created for COTS. In fact, NASA was granted authority to use Other Transactions from its inception under The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 as Amended. The Act grants NASA the authority to:

...enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary in the conduct of its work and on such terms as it may deem appropriate...

The COTS program capitalized on this authority, ran a competition, and subsequently selected two companies to share in \$485M to perform commercial orbital demonstrations. To show proof of the capability, a successful demonstration must include, ultimately, a visit to the International Space Station with cargo or humans.

The Funded SAA, as a contractual instrument, is an innovative way to stimulate and incentivize the commercial aerospace industry. It does this by granting maximum data rights. The goals are to achieve reliable, cost effective access to low-Earth orbit, and create a market environment in which commercial space transportation services are available to Government and private sector customers.

QUESTIONS

In an effort to fully understand the circumstances that may contribute significantly to the project's success, several questions were asked of industry in the market survey. A few common threads developed. The first was that industry asked that they be allowed to determine their own fates. In other words, if they perform as agreed, pay them. If they don't perform as agreed, don't pay. The second thread was that they wanted the Government to remain at arms length for a couple of reasons.

NASA knows human space travel as well as anyone on the planet. However, industry says that the Government's involvement drives the cost up. So they would like to have NASA nearby to answer hard questions or to help with the use of existing facilities but not for day-to-day interaction. The third thread was that the companies wanted to own the data rights. The fourth was Federal Aviation Administration licensing, similar to SpaceShipOne for flights, instead of NASA approvals. Lastly, they wanted NASA to sign an agreement, even before development of the vehicle that would commit the Government to some amount of business over some period of time, if the company were to be successful. They seemed to like the term anchor tenant, the way a well-known department store in a mall is an anchor tenant. These stores know and understand their business base and ensure a certain number of people will pass through the mall in a given period. The Government, in this case, would ensure a certain

amount of revenue to the space service provider in addition to other business they could generate. For some government types, these requests were like swallowing a powdered golf ball, but as it turns out, COTS provides all but the anchor tenancy.

ONE-OF-A-KIND

COTS was a full and open competition conducted within a ten month span (Oct 2005 to Aug 2006). A great deal of work was covered in that time. The COTS team synopsised, wrote, and published a solicitation called an Announcement (the "A" was a big deal). The team wrote a one-of-a-kind evaluation plan, responded to over 500 industry questions, evaluated 21 proposals, held face-to-face negotiations with six companies, and performed a delta evaluation just to mention a few of the activities.

The COTS project used several innovations. One was the use of Levels of Confidence with accompanying color codes to state the likelihood of success instead of a point system. Another was the introduction of an agreements officer who functioned somewhat similarly to a Contracting Officer. The team also employed a venture capitalist and a former Bigelow executive to look at business matters. Instead of a typical proposal, COTS proposals included business plans. One other innovation was that proposal instructions were published and the evaluation factors were included in the evaluation plan rather than a published document.

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An (Almost) Excellent Adventure

By Dave Jones, Langley Research Center

Job changes are often cited by mental health professionals as stress-inducing life events. So when I left the cozy confines of the Langley Office of Procurement in June 2005, to work in my first non-procurement job in 18 years, it was not surprising that I was more than a little nervous. However, once I got settled into my assignment in the Aeronautics Test Program (ATP) Office, I found that a new world of NASA knowledge had opened up to me. The stress was quickly replaced by the feeling that I was going to have a truly valuable experience during my year in the NASA Leadership Development Program (LDP).

THE ATP EXPERIENCE

I was fortunate enough to get to know Blair Gloss (the ATP Program Manager) during wind tunnel support procurement at Langley. When I needed to arrange my first LDP rotational assignment, his name immediately came to mind. The ATP was just starting at the time, and they needed plenty of help getting the program up and running. I didn't have a specific job title, but I was often referred to as ATP's "business expert." My work assignments definitely had a business slant to them.

The biggest assignment I had was to develop a business plan for the ATP. Without going into a lot of details, this required me to review approximately twenty aeronautics test facilities at Ames, Glenn, and Langley to determine things like the future demand for the facilities, the level of competition from non-NASA domestic and foreign test facilities, the price sensitivity of each facility's customers, and the human capital and

physical conditions of facilities. The process of producing this business plan gave me a knowledge of and appreciation for one of my biggest procurement customers that I never would have gained simply by working as their Contracting Officer.



The ATP did not let me get away without giving me a procurement-related tasking. My other major assignment in ATP was to study the current contract support for aeronautics test facilities in NASA and to explore alternative contract configurations that might enhance the ATP's ability to effectively manage these national assets. I was given the opportunity to present my findings to several senior-level managers in the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate at Headquarters. The ATP is planning to submit my report as a part of their response to the Agency's Mission Focus Review. According to remarks made by the Administrator at the Space Transportation Association in January 2007, this internal review is "looking into our mission support areas for ways to focus our activities toward the highest priority tasks at hand....We need to eliminate activities which are less important, in favor of those which are more important."

One other benefit to my time in ATP was that I learned more about the wind tunnel business

from the test facility experts located at Ames, Glenn, Langley, and Headquarters. As you will read below, making lasting connections with NASA people from all over the Agency was a recurring theme from my year in the LDP.

MR. JONES GOES TO WASHINGTON

My boss (Kim Stone, the LaRC Procurement Officer) and I agreed that part of my LDP experience should include a detail to NASA Headquarters. So in February 2006, I headed to Washington for a three-month assignment in the Strategic Investments Division (SID) of the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation (PA&E). I had singled this organization out as my top choice, and luckily, one of my LDP classmates was just finishing her rotation in SID when I was trying to secure an assignment. I ended up taking over her job as an analyst reviewing project performance and budgets for Science Mission Directorate projects.

The work in SID was interesting from the standpoint of learning how both PA&E and the Science Mission Directorate work. I worked directly for Mary Beth Zimmerman in SID. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the valuable instruction she provided me on how NASA projects are funded and managed. The opportunity to see the Headquarters environment on a daily basis was also a valuable experience. It gave me a better understanding of what is considered important at Headquarters and why.

This is where I explain the "almost" in the title of this article. Going away to DC was a great

work experience. But it was not a great personal life experience for me to leave my family at home and go work and live in another city. If I had to do it again, I would either take my family with me or opt for an assignment with industry or another government agency close to home. I mention this not to discourage others from taking assignments away from home, but rather to help others make their choices with their eyes open to all possible impacts and options.

THE PROGRAM

The LDP is not just rotational work assignments. The other two program elements are group workshops and a class project. The workshops are a combination of leadership coaching and practical training on things like negotiating, meeting facilitation, and even etiquette! The class participants were together for five workshops covering six weeks. The time together also helped us to bond as a group. Some highlights were a one-week congressional operations class on Capitol Hill and an outing to Gettysburg to learn “leadership lessons” from the famous Civil War battle.

Every LDP class does a group project over the course of the year.

Ours was a study of information systems used in support of management decision-making at the highest levels of NASA. Our group studied current NASA systems and benchmarked other agencies and their systems. We also interviewed a large number of NASA leaders to determine information requirements, compared these requirements with the capabilities of known systems, and made recommendations concerning the best matches of requirements and capabilities. The project gave us all a chance to work closely with our classmates, and in the process we learned much about other NASA Centers and areas of work different from our own.

All of this togetherness gave the entire LDP class one more thing: a network of people throughout the Agency that we can call upon during the rest of our careers. In some cases, these classmates are friends that we’ll have for a lifetime.

Chris Williams, the LDP Program Manager, and her staff run an outstanding program and can’t be commended enough for the work they do.

The LaRC Office of Procurement suffered a devastating

amount of attrition during the year I was gone, and several times I was fully prepared to be called back to fill a hole in the line. (That’s battlefield talk they taught us at Gettysburg!) To Kim Stone’s credit, she did not call me back, even though it was painful in the short term for the organization to give up one more experienced hand. The message it sent is that training and development are important and can’t be pushed aside just because the purchase requests keep coming, because the purchase requests will *always* keep coming.

RE-ENTRY

Coming back to Langley was a happy occasion, because in 16 years I have made a few friends here. I am glad to be back in their company every day. I’m also happy to be back working in the procurement field after trying out different jobs for a year. The time away was just what I needed to reaffirm my desire to continue my career in procurement. I’m scheduled to rotate through a couple of different jobs in the Langley Office of Procurement in my first year back, so my professional development is not ending just because my LDP year is over.

COTS

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THE FUTURE

The premise of COTS focuses on the use of the Government as an investor rather than a customer for a good or a service. It is an investment that may pay off handsomely if at least one of the selected companies is successful during this Phase I demonstration project. NASA’s contribution to the industry partner covers a sizable portion of the financial resources needed to complete the project, however there is still a sizable contribution that the partner is required to raise. The inability to raise money or lack of performance could be grounds to end the partnership.

Although there are many skeptics who don’t believe the commercial industry is ready for such a large undertaking, NASA and other potential customers will watch closely. Hopes are that the next few years will prove very fruitful and create an opportunity for us all to vacation in space. As the Chinese proverb says, “*The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.*”

Thriving in the Midst of Change

By Olivia T. Gunter, NSSC Transition Specialist, Goddard Space Flight Center

Many of you would agree that only one thing is constant, and that is change. We all have experienced change in some way, shape, or form. Some of these experiences have been good; some not so good; and still others have been dreadful. I am sure that most will agree that the outcome of change, though, depends heavily upon how we deal with the change. We can stand still and let change take hold of us, or we can take hold of change and direct its outcome. In the midst of any change, we must continue to satisfy our responsibilities, remain accountable, and maintain a positive outlook.

The Procurement Operations Division (POD) at Goddard recently endured a major series of changes when the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) started working with grants. The POD members made the decision early in the process to take the high road and meet these changes with innovation and zeal while supporting the transition to the best of their abilities. POD's success is a story of inspiration that all can use when dealing with the challenges of change.

To fully appreciate what the POD has accomplished, you must first understand the work involved. Historically, Goddard has been responsible for a significant number of NASA's grants. Each year, the grants office at GSFC processes almost 6,000 grants and cooperative agreements totaling over \$600M. The grants office also processes between 600 and 900 closeouts annually.

The office staff interfaces with several organizations – including NASA Headquarters, resources, other enterprises, and accounting – to keep the NASA Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program operating smoothly and efficiently. In addition to the awards and



closeouts, there are hundreds of administrative actions that must be completed in a timely fashion. On a daily basis, the grants office staff facilitates such administrative actions as period of performance extensions, principal investigator name changes, and procurement requests releases. They provide research and respond to numerous telephone inquiries from the grants awardees, COTR's, Congressional Offices, and the general public. While plans for the NSSC were taking shape, the work demands did not cease. The grants office staff functioned under the burden of knowing that the Headquarters and GSFC grants and cooperative agreements award process would migrate to the NSSC in the third quarter of FY 2006. Was this stressful? You bet it was! But, despite these pressures the grants staff continued to be productive.

The big changes started when the NSSC began operations in May

2006. This impacted several organizations at Goddard including procurement. Within the procurement organization, one of the functional activities that migrated to NSSC was the processing of all new grant and cooperative agreement awards. What did this mean for the procurement community? It meant that the grants specialist positions also moved to the NSSC. Those staff members who choose not to relocate to the NSSC needed to find other jobs.

A GREAT WORK ETHIC

There is no question that while change is often difficult to accept and embrace, it is even more trying when it impacts your personal life and loved ones. This was the situation that the grants office staff faced. Making the decision to uproot their families and move to a new location, or to find other employment locally, was not easy. With this cloud lurking and the stress that came with it, these team members were expected to continue to perform at their usual high competence level. They did! They continued producing and providing exemplary customer service while concurrently updating resumes, preparing for job interviews, working with career counselors, and dealing with the fears and concerns of their loved ones. The work of the grants staff did not suffer. Together this tight-knit group was able to face change with a capital "C."

What did NASA do to prepare for the NSSC? NASA established an NSSC Transition Team at each Center. This included an active role

on the team by POD personnel. In addition, the POD developed proactive plans and activities to mitigate the NSSC's impact on the organization, specifically the grants specialists. The POD management team also worked with other organizations to identify detail positions for the grants specialists and to explore training and re-focusing opportunities. The grants specialists were given permission to accept detail positions. This gave members new skills and let them obtain experience so they could qualify for new positions. While they were on detail, their regular positions were backfilled by term hires and soon-to-retire procurement staff. What a clever idea! As a result, two grants specialists retired, two specialists were reassigned to other positions within procurement, four specialists completed details and were selected for new jobs, and six specialists successfully transitioned into other procurement positions within the POD.

HELPING HAND

To provide special assistance with the transition, the POD management team dedicated a staff person to work closely with the grants specialists to guide them through this major change. That was my job. As the transition specialist, my duties included acting as a liaison between the grants staff and management, identifying

opportunities at the Center, and collaborating with other Federal agencies, and identifying job opportunities. I assisted members in preparing and updating resumes, personnel profiles, and Individual Development Plans. Part of my job was forging partnerships with other



organizations to obtain resources. I participated in Integrated Network Groups. As important, I helped in developing and planning the schedules, training, work details, and logistics. A major piece of my job was to foster a team environment, which helped relieve some of the stress of the people being affected. I am pleased that the work I did was one of many efforts the POD management team used to establish an insightful, effective, and successful transition plan.

Today, the NSSC is handling most new grants and cooperative agreements awards and administration. The transition was a challenge for the new organization picking up this work and for the POD as it went away. But it was a successful

transition for the work, and for the people involved. In FY 2006, the grants team was recognized by the Annual Goddard Awards of Excellence Committee and received the "Goddard Grants Transition to NSSC Team Award." The grants team received another honor: the "Management Operations Directorate Special Award for Teamwork."

All staff members should be commended for their ability to maintain performance, efficiency, effectiveness, and exemplary customer service during a time of life changing adjustment. The POD management team should also be commended for its innovative thinking while supporting its employees during this challenging time. I believe the POD management, the entire procurement organization, and NASA can use this transition as a positive "lessons learned." We, the NASA family, are living up to our NASA values by supporting one another especially in the face of adversity, loss, and major CHANGE!

A big thank you goes to the following members of the grants office: Theresa Bryant, Donna Burfoot, Lisa Foster, Lavern Harris, Stephanie Jackson, Jacque Lofton, Nancy McCormick, LouEtta Milstead, Sandy Grello, Barbara Scott, Brenda Smith, Isabell Watts, Paul Williams, Dean Yoshioka, and Helen Young (who passed away recently).

Stay Tuned...

The next issue of the *Procurement Countdown* will feature what happened at the December Procurement Training.

NSSC Transitions Grants for All NASA Centers

By Tina Landes, NASA Shared Services Center

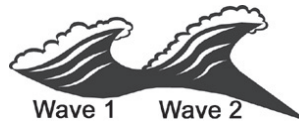
The NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC), Procurement Division, Research Activities Branch is now responsible for awarding and administering new grants and cooperative agreements for all NASA Centers. The NSSC is responsible for the award and administration of new grants and cooperative agreements. The exclusions are award of grants and cooperative agreements to establish and/or maintain science and research institutes, and award of cooperative agreements to commercial firms. It is the objective of the NSSC to provide support to the NASA research, science, and education communities in the award and administration of research, education, training, and facility grants and cooperative agreements.

The NSSC transitioned NASA Centers in two Waves:

■ The NSSC transitioned the responsibility for Wave I Centers

and NASA Headquarters on May 1, 2006. Wave I Centers included Dryden Flight Research Center, Goddard Space Flight Center, NASA Headquarters, NASA Management Office, and Stennis Space Center.

■ The NSSC transitioned the responsibility for Wave II Centers on October 1, 2006. Wave II



Centers included Ames Research Center, Glenn Research Center, Johnson Space Center, Langley Research Center, Kennedy Space Center, and Marshall Space Flight Center.

This transition does not affect current grants and cooperative agreements awarded by the Centers. These awards will continue to be managed by the respective

Center and the transition will have no impact on recipients. Conversely, the transition will not change the current payment process nor will it change the lines of communication between the recipients and their NASA scientific, technical, and educational communities.

The NSSC awarded 686 grants and cooperative agreements during the period of May 1 through September 30, 2006 for a cumulative value of \$110,646,000. All of these were handled in less than the NSSC established metric of 29 days from receipt of a complete technical requirements package to award. Included in this award total were 57 earmarks.

Centers may track the status of their grant awards at the following website: www.nssc.nasa.gov/grantstatus. Inquiries may be made by calling the NSSC Contact Center at 877-NSSC123 (1-877-677-2123).

Heat Shield

(continued from page 10)

The ADP Project Manager, James Reuther, understood early on the critical need for effective communication and collaboration for the overall project, including the procurement activities. He keeps everyone on schedule. He works tirelessly to understand the procurement and legal concerns, making sure that all team members have the opportunity for providing input bringing issues to resolution so that the project can move forward. He includes procurement staff in many program meetings and decision-making processes, including weekly team lead meetings. His encouragement and support of procurement participation in the project has facilitated an understanding of the technical requirements.

Over the next 18 months or so, additional contracts will be awarded and there will be plenty of contract administration activities going on. Contract deliverables will play a critical role in NASA's decisions relative to the heat shield that will ultimately protect Orion during its return to Earth.

The collaborative effort that has taken place relative to supporting the ADP is truly noteworthy, as it has required the committed involvement of many NASA Centers and Headquarters. The Ames procurement organization would like to thank all of those individuals and organizations who have helped us with our TPS procurements. Through this collaborative effort, your input has helped us tremendously and has been very much appreciated.

People on the Move

(continued from page 5)

Maryland. Tiandra Sherrill worked at LaRC in the Research and Contracting Branch for three years. She now works for GSA in Philadelphia.

MSFC

Congratulations: The following procurement personnel have all been promoted this past calendar year: Byron Butler and Roxanne Melton in the Office of Procurement; Melinda Dodson, Lana Fischer, and Belinda Triplett in the Science and Space Systems Support Office; Lizette Kummer, Kimberly Daniels Carson, Erica Carter, and Cheri Burton-McCaskey in the Engineering Support Office; Eunice Adams and Vanessa Lindsey in the Institutional Support Office; Tyler Cochran and Poppy Dennis in the Space Transportation Support Office. Also, congratulations to James Casper who was converted from a co-op student to a term appointment at Marshall.

New Faces: We are pleased to welcome the following three new hires to MSFC: Jillian Pate from the National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA; Joe Eversol from SEI Group, Inc., Huntsville, AL; and Mike Thomas from Digital Fusion, Inc., Huntsville. A warm welcome to Lorraine Peterson who transferred from the National Space and Science Technology Center along with Mark Stiles and James Bailey returning to MSFC.

NMO

Farewell: The NMO says a fond farewell to Jeff Lupis. Jeff had been the Procurement Officer here for the past three years. Now he is back at Headquarters. He was a great manager. We miss him already.

New Faces: The NMO is happy to welcome Ron Sepesi from Glenn. Ron is the acting Procurement Officer, temporarily replacing Jeff Lupis. Ron turned his life upside-down, moving away from Glenn after many years, to help us out for a while.

NSSC

New Faces: John Cecconi comes from the Department of the Army. He served as the Commander's Representative and Supervisory Contract Administrator at the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant. John is assigned to the Research Activities Branch under Monique Sullivan. He has over 20 years of contracting experience. He is active on many non-profit boards of directors as either an officer or a grant writer. He works with the St. Tammy School Board and will be completing a grant to pay for resource instructors at many of the schools. Currently he is completing a grant to build and support a mental health hospital in St. Tammy Parish. John serves as the treasurer of the local chapter of the National Contract Management Association.

Angela Deren comes from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District. Previous agencies where she worked include the Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Virginia and the National Science Foundation in Arlington, VA. November 29th marked her 13-year anniversary in the Federal Government. She is assigned to the Procurement Operations Branch under Michael Sweigart, working with Agency-wide contracts under

the Consolidated Contracting Initiative.

Joseph D. Lewis comes from the Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. He is assigned to the Contracts Management Division. Joseph is a veteran from the U.S. Air Force with over 22 years contract specialist experience.

Paula Martin comes from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile, AL. She is assigned to the Procurement Division, Research Activities Branch. Paula has 26 years of Federal Service.

SSC

Farewell: The following people have left our staff since August 2005: Vince Andres, Henry Molnar, and Ann Sharpe.

New Faces: Susan Dupuis, SSC Procurement Officer, announces the arrival of eight new employees that have joined our staff since August 2005. Rose Baker comes to NASA from the General Services Administration in New Orleans. Judy Bruscano comes to NASA from the U.S. Air Force at Eglin Air Force Base, FL. Beth Bradley comes to SSC from the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC). Robyn Calliham comes to NASA from the Army Corps of Engineers at New Orleans. Jake Jacobs comes to SSC from the NSSC. Joseph Ladner comes to NASA from the Naval Oceanographic Office at SSC. Gerald Norris comes to NASA from the U.S. Air Force at Keesler Air Force Base, MS. Michelle Stracener comes to NASA from the Army Corps of Engineers in Mobile, AL.

Other: Jane Gipson (formerly Jane Johnson) passed away in August 2005.

The Challenge of a Post-Katrina FEMA Detail

By Rex Elliott, Goddard Space Flight Center

In late 2005, I completed a 40-day detail to Baton Rouge, LA, helping FEMA award disaster-recovery contracts. Here are some of my reflections from the journal I kept between November 8 and December 17, 2005.

NOVEMBER 8, 2005

I came to Baton Rouge to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita by doing procurement work for FEMA. After arriving in Baton Rouge, I went straight to the FEMA Joint Field Office (JFO), not far from downtown Baton Rouge. The JFO is unlike any place I've ever been before. It has employees from dozens of Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as numerous contractors. Although FEMA is in charge of the place, its employees are actually a minority.

Although I have 22 years of Federal procurement experience, I'm still brand new around here. FEMA has some special rules we have to follow, but they also have some special authorities to make the job easier. Although we generally try to compete the contracting opportunities, until December 1st we still can use the blanket authority to award anything sole source. Occasionally that comes in very handy (but I don't know what we'll do after the authority expires). We try to award all the contracts we can to small businesses located in Louisiana. Apparently other Federal agencies at the JFO have been giving only a tiny fraction of their contracts to Louisiana firms. FEMA has been blamed for that too, even though their numbers are actually pretty impressive (85-90 percent). Since FEMA is the most visible agency, it gets blamed for a lot – even when it's not FEMA's fault.

NOVEMBER 15, 2005

I've worked 25 hours in two days – this job is pretty demanding. Unfortunately, I don't seem to be completing many procurements. Today I got a \$7K purchase order awarded –took a lot longer than it should have – and it was just for rental of porta-potties (of all



things). Part of the problem is being unfamiliar with FEMA's automated systems, but part of the problem is just the usual problems with getting procurements awarded.

Tomorrow I'll be in a hurry to get a purchase order awarded for some light tower rentals. There's a 40 acre morgue with only two light towers now, and they need a lot more lights. They want the lights put under contract tomorrow, but I don't even have funding yet. We'll see. Sometimes FEMA is really good at making things happen quickly.

NOVEMBER 18, 2005

Yesterday I worked 7:45 a.m. – 7:15 p.m. Work is fast-paced and sometimes people are screaming at me to “get this contract awarded” (although people usually understand about the limitations of our situation). I came here to help out, and after a week here, I'm finally in a position to do some good. However, the stress can be a lot to

handle. Some of my co-workers are already counting down their days. They're working hard (figuring they can handle anything for 30 days), but I can see that the stress is getting to them.

NOVEMBER 29, 2005

The pace at the office has eased somewhat. I'm trying to use the time to catch up, but it's really tempting to just catch my breath. The FEMA big-wigs decided that nobody but a FEMA contracting officer can sign contracts, and they aren't giving out any warrants or even purchase cards to non-FEMA employees. That makes it harder to get things accomplished. Right now, I have seven or eight contract actions waiting to be signed.

Several of the male detailees and I went to the local pub tonight. As usual, we ended up talking about work – perhaps even saved each other some time by sharing valuable information. We probably should have shared it at the office anyway, but then we don't have any staff meetings, and we generally don't plan anything. We're almost entirely reactive.

I was thinking about the war stories I'll be telling when I return to Maryland. When somebody asks me how it was, I could say “it was horribly unorganized” or “it was an opportunity to do a lot of good” – both situations have certainly been true.

DECEMBER 6, 2005

Last Saturday was a good day at work (I completed five contract actions and made progress on

several others). Still I had seven more assigned to me, so I'm even further behind. I have only nine more work days before I return to Maryland. I have a couple of large contract actions that I especially want to finish. One is pretty messy, so it will be something of a race to see it through. When I got here I inherited several messes. I don't want to leave any more messes than I have to for the people who come after me.

DECEMBER 9, 2005

Throughout my detail, I've wondered if I was making a difference. Today I know I made a difference. I cleared up a contractual mess for a small business based in Florida. This business set up and operated a 2000-person camp to house relief workers. It also took over for another small business that had failed in its own efforts to do the same thing. The Florida business went the extra mile, and served the public interest well – but they had a huge cash flow problem. FEMA wasn't paying their invoices because the work they'd done wasn't under contract and because they made some simple mistakes in the way they invoiced. The problems really weren't that complicated, but they were big and important. Cash flow is the lifeblood of a small business.

I sought a way to justify getting money to this small business and keep it solvent. I was able to justify about \$5 million in short-term payments to this company, and this assuaged their creditors (at least for the time being). I was also able to negotiate an increase of another \$5 million for the work the business did outside of the contract. The settlement for this work has now been negotiated, but it still remains to be approved by FEMA's officials. Maybe this alone wasn't

worth the trip to Baton Rouge, but it's comforting to know that I've done some good. I helped keep a good company in business and helped keep the Federal bureaucracy from unwittingly doing the wrong thing.

DECEMBER 11, 2005

This afternoon, a new detailee showed up. Rory just arrived from Chicago where he works for the Department of Energy. He will be here until February 15th. It felt



strange orienting him to the way we've been living down here. Fortunately, he's worked a security service procurement before, so I presume he'll be assigned to take over the new guard service requirement I was just given. It covers \$8 million for 180 days of work – one of the bigger requirements I've seen. I'm surprised how many things are procured on a fixed-price basis, but the loaded-labor hour seems to be the standard method of pricing security contracts (from what I've been told). The labor rate is supposed to be charged just for touch labor too – all supervision, administrative support, overhead costs, etc. are built into the loadings of the labor rate – I hadn't seen this before. That's one of the things I like about procurement – there's always more to learn.

In discussing the way to structure the security contract, I came across the familiar situation where the Government COTR really wants a supplement to his own workforce. He wants to

manage the staffing and hours for each person on the contractor's workforce. I had first thought we'd structure multiple award IDIQ contracts and select different contractors to provide the guards for different FEMA trailer parks. That way, we could ensure the competitive atmosphere continued after contract award. We would also get some local small business participation (by having at least one contract be awarded to a Louisiana small business). However, after seeing the way some contracts have worked out, I think we're going to go single award labor-hour contract with the single loaded labor rate. I sometimes assume that only NASA has the problem of being wedded to level-of-effort contracting, but it's obviously more widespread.

Rory asked what kind of requirements we're procuring, so I had to stop and think about it a little bit. Mostly, I've been renting equipment, procuring base camp operations, and buying some miscellaneous goods and services. I've done my best to get the right needs met using the right tools at the right price.

Unfortunately, I've learned that some of the small businesses in the area have been using the disaster as a gravy-train. It's pretty outrageous that some local firms (under the guise of "helping small business") have been bleeding the American taxpayers and taking away badly needed funds from some worthwhile causes. Here's another lesson that has become very real to me during my time here: The dollars we spend are huge and the opportunity for abuse is great. We need competent professionals overseeing these procurements to ensure the interests of the American taxpayers are served well.

3...2...1...Lift Off!

By The CMM Project Team

The Contract Management Module (CMM) was successfully implemented the week of November 13, 2006. CMM deployment marks another significant accomplishment for NASA, as it is the largest PRISM/SAP integration in the Federal Government. If it weren't for the valiant efforts of many, CMM would not be a reality today.

CMM was configured from a commercial-off-the-shelf product, PRISM, to meet NASA's unique procurement requirements that included integration with the core financial system, SAP. CMM provides NASA with an enhanced electronic tool. It has contract/grant writing, procurement workload management, data management, and contract administration capabilities. The CMM software ensures a consistent, standardized approach to meeting NASA's procurement needs.

With the support of NASA Headquarters and dedicated Center personnel, many months of software configuration, system integration testing, training material development, information delivery design, and data conversion activities were completed. The weeks before go-live were extremely busy with many preparation activities including end-user training, final data conversion activities, and support/war room planning.

TRAINING

Training all NASA Procurement personnel was a significant activity and was a tremendous success thanks to the coordinated effort by the CMM training team, Center personnel, and the vendor trainers. All worked diligently to develop the training materials that included end-user procedures, job aids, training manuals, and NASA-unique exercises. An integrated training schedule was developed and implemented with the cooperation of every Center. This effort enabled the entire NASA procurement workforce to be trained prior to go-live.

DATA

The data conversion effort was a major undertaking and was an unprecedented success with all Centers exceeding their goals. This success was a direct result of endless hours worked by Center personnel who performed data clean-up activities. With support from the CMM data conversion team, the data conversion activities resulted in the cleanest data that NASA has ever achieved. All Centers are commended for emphasizing the urgency and priority of accomplishing these activities that supported the effective conversion.

Current CMM activities are focused on providing stabilization support to the Centers. CMM support/war rooms staffed by CMM experts were established at various Centers and within the CMM Project. The first line-of-defense for end users is their own Center's support/war room. When necessary, issues are elevated to the CMM Project support/war room for evaluation and resolution. In addition, the CMM Project conducts stabilization calls with the Centers to share pertinent information related to go-live issues and to promote timely stabilization.

After the stabilization period, several CMM Project members will transition to the IEMP Competency Center (CC) for sustainment support. The Centers will each have a CMM Center business process lead who will interface with the CC sustainment support personnel. On-going activities between Center representatives and the CC will ensure the continued success of CMM.

Congratulations to all who directly participated in this endeavor and to all of the NASA Agency personnel who supported the successful implementation of CMM.

For more information about CMM, please visit the CMM i-View page at: <https://iview.ifmp.nasa.gov/irj/portal> Work Zone tab, CMM tab.

Procurement Countdown

Procurement Countdown is published by NASA's Office of Procurement.

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