



## The Big Picture The NASA Procurement Conference 2003

By Kathleen J. Huddleston, NASA Management Office

Think warm breezes, palm trees, an elegant hotel with a fabulous pool, high tech fitness center, the finest dining, finding your comforter turned, and chocolates placed on your pillow. Dreaming? Not if you were lucky enough to attend the four-day NASA 2003 Procurement Conference at the Grand Lakes Hotel and Resort in Orlando, Florida. It couldn't have been a better location and to paraphrase Tom Luedtke, it beats a Motel 6 and just goes to show, competition definitely has its payoffs!

The NASA 2003 Procurement Conference was another success. Attendance was great, the location and facility were fabulous, the weather was nice; and the conference presenters were excellent. This year we had roughly 300 attendees participating in an exchange of knowledge through presentations and informal discussions. There were 15 workshops, 7 functional area breakout sessions and 11 idea market discussions. It was the perfect opportunity to meet up with old friends, meet colleagues from other centers,

network, exchange ideas and enhance and update our knowledge of NASA and the procurement arena.

Our host and conference coordinator this year was the one and only Yolande Harden. What can be said other than she did a fabulous job orchestrating this



*Fred Gregory gives the opening address at the conference.*

very large and very successful event? Thank you Yolande for your hard work, dedication, and creativity.

Each morning the conference began with a continental breakfast, opening remarks from our Procurement Administrator (and part-time comedian) Tom Luedtke, and a special guest speaker. We were fortunate to have a few of NASA's "finest"

brief us on the Agency's infrastructure and the roles and responsibilities as they pertain to each one's functional areas. Although the NASA Administrator, Sean O'Keefe could not attend, we were honored to have Fred Gregory, NASA Deputy Administrator; Paul Pastorek, General Counsel; Robert W. Cobb, NASA Inspector General; and James L. Jennings, Associate Deputy Administrator, Institutions and Asset Management. Each guest gave an enlightening presentation and then engaged the audience during a question and answer period. Many of the participants took advantage of the opportunity to ask important questions, and we all benefited from the exchanges.

Workshops began around mid-morning. The many topics presented drew considerable interest and were very thought provoking. Sessions included the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC); Multiple Award, IDIQ, Multiple Discipline Contracts; Small Business Issues; Best

*(continued on page 2)*

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### Highlights...

Most of this issue's articles are about the Procurement Training Conference. Look for overviews on pages 1, 8, 12, and 13.

Articles on specific sessions are featured on pages 10 and 11.

The Procurement Awards are discussed on pages 15 and 16.

Specific impressions on the conference are on pages 2, 4, and 5.

Features are on Tasha Davis, an NCIP intern at MSFC on page 6 and the SSC Acquisitions Management Office on page 7.

Information about the DOL Wage website is on page 9.

# The Big Picture

(continued from page 1)

Practices in the Pricing Arena; Acquisition Contract Strategies for Major Procurements; E-Gov and an Evolving Landscape; Return to Flight; SAP Tips, Tricks and Workarounds; Successful Debriefings and Source Selection Statements; Contractor Access to Confidential Business Information; Property Issues; Competitive Sourcing; Mission Assurance Surveillance Plans in PBC Contracts; NASA Research Announcements; and Affirmative Procurement & Environmental Management Systems.

There were also two functional breakout sessions each day. These sessions included Policy; Pricing; Training and Career Development; Grants and Coop-

erative Agreements; and Simplified Acquisitions. We had the opportunity to participate in an Idea Market, which was an informal brainstorming session where participants could move from topic to topic discussing concerns and issues, then offer recommendations. Each Idea Market had two facilitators to keep the discussions moving. From an informal perspective, this approach was very effective in generating discussions.

The last day offered the opportunity to tour the Kennedy Space Center. What a fantastic way to end a terrific week! If you haven't been on the Kennedy Tour, you don't know what you're missing. Touring the center has a

way of confirming the remarkable outcomes of all the hard work and dedication of the NASA family. It's a tremendous and unforgettable experience.

After the conference, I took a casual poll of some of the participants (see below). The general consensus was that the conference was very informative and that good ideas were gleaned from the topics of discussion. The two topics that attracted the highest attendance were Best Practices in the Pricing Arena and Return to Flight-Procurement Challenges.

I'm looking forward to NASA's next procurement conference, and NASA is looking forward to seeing you all there.

## NMO Comments:

### Best Practices and Pricing Arena

*Presenters: Patricia Beall, KSC; Lorrie Eakin, GSFC; and Jose Garcia, JSC*

Every element discussed during the module at some time will be helpful to me....I can tell you the discussion on pricing contract changes where the prospective and retrospective approaches were compared will be helpful in the near future." E. M.

### Shared Services

*Presenters: Kim Dalglish and Jim Becker, HQ*

"Kim Dalglish and Jim Becker did a great job presenting the facts and why an A-76 competition had to be held. Seriously, the module was presented excellently, and I didn't realize how misinformed I was of the NSSC until I attended this session." R. Q.

### Electronic Government, An Evolving Landscape

*Presenters: Ron Crider and Ken Stepka, HQ*

"The presentation provided a superb overview of the type of electronic systems that we work with, how these electronic tools fit together, and how these systems will change." S. M.

### Policy Functional Breakout

*Leader: Robin Strohacker, GRC*

"My memory is most vivid on the ISRS discussion. Not because I had a concern about ISRS but because I couldn't get over the fact that this Agency collects so much data on its contractors. Made me scratch my head!!" J.C.

### Multiple Discipline Awards

*Presenters: Lorenzo Chance, KSC; Jerry Edmond, HQ; Karin Huth, GRC*

The module was excellent. The speakers provided excellent insight into the advantages as well as challenges that are faced. The examples used during the discussions were excellent." S.B.

### Successful Debriefings and Source Selection Statements

*Presenters: Jeffrey Cullen, JSC; Jim Huk, SSC; David Sudduth, HQ; Sumara Thompson-King HQ, Code G*

"Overall, I was very pleased with this module. The presenters were extremely knowledgeable, and were able to successfully field not only specific, direct questions on these topics, but more philosophical comments as well. Since our experience with source selection statements and debriefings has ranged from wildly successful to incredibly distressing, I was very glad to hear that agencywide instructional guides are being prepared for our use." R.S.

### NASA Research Announcements

*Presenters: Dawn Fountain, GSFC; Suzan Moody, HQ; Nancy Sessoms, LaRC; Lupe Velasquez, ARC; and Mary Jane Yeager, LaRC*

This session was so interesting the time flew by. I gleaned a great deal of good information. The speakers were very well informed, the material presented was excellent and the speakers easily drew the audience into the discussion." K.H.



## People on the Move

### ARC

Congratulations: We are all wishing much success to our new group leads. Deb Glass has been selected as a group lead in the Acquisition Branch for Aeronautics; Mark Lefler has been selected as a group lead in the Acquisition Branch for Business and Policy; and Carlos Torrez has been selected as a group lead in the Acquisition Branch for Center Operations and Space.

Chuck Duff recently returned to ARC after spending a year at HQ as the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Procurement. Upon his return, Chuck was selected to be the Deputy Director of Center Operations. The Acquisition Division's loss is the Center's gain. Congratulations Chuck!

New Faces: A warm welcome to Audrey Guerra and Kelly Kraft. Audrey recently transferred from the Defense Contracts Management Agency in Sunnyvale, CA. Kelly transferred from the Department of the Army in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Both Audrey and Kelly are contract specialists assigned to the Acquisition Branch for Center Operations and Space.

Farewell: Carolyn La Follette retired in January after 36 years with the government. Carolyn came to ARC in 1975. She became a Branch Chief in 1982 and, on many occasions, between 1982 to 2004, served as the Acting Deputy Procurement Officer or Acting Procurement Officer. In her 20 years as Chief, Acquisition

Branch for Center Operations and Space, Carolyn provided procurement support to every organization at the center, including many major construction, aeronautics, and space projects, as well as center-wide support for grants and institutional services.

Barbara Young also retired in January after 37 years with the government. During her 17 years at ARC, Barbara was a senior lead contract specialist in the Acquisition Branch for Center Operations and Space. While at ARC Barbara was involved with and oversaw many source evaluation actions. Most recently, in addition to her review responsibilities, she was the contracting officer for the ARC ODIN task.

Errol Ridgway retired in January after 17 years with the government. One of his major responsibilities during his 14 years at ARC was as the contracting officer for the Federal Information Processing Services contract, one of ARC's larger contracts. During the past two years he was also the COTR for the CCI contract for closeout services for the Agency.

Tommie Smith retired from government service in December 2003. Tommie began his career at ARC and then transferred to Marshall Space Flight Center where he spent many years. Tommie returned to ARC seven years ago and was assigned to the Acquisition Branch for Center Operations and Space.

Julie Donley has accepted a non-procurement position with the Department of Homeland Security, Customs Service. Julie began her career at ARC as the Acquisition Division Secretary and then, two years ago, became a contract specialist. We wish all of them well in their new endeavors.

### HQ

Farewell: Headquarters said goodbye to three invaluable members recently. Chuck Duff returned to Ames after spending a year at Headquarters as the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Procurement. While he was here, Chuck oversaw major initiatives including Freedom to Manage, took on major issues for the AA, and was an important part of the Office of Procurement team. Barbara Cephas, who handled the procurement training requirements for procurement personnel throughout the Agency, retired after 31 years, all of them spent in procurement at HQ. If you took any of the CON classes in recent years, you can thank Barbara for getting interesting instructors and working to make your experience a pleasant one. Bill Childs who at various times handled the VPO, IFM issues, Master Buy Plan input, metrics, and much more, also retired recently. Bill and his wife are leaving the DC area for the warmer climate and brighter lights of Las Vegas. We wish them well.

### GSFC

Congratulations: The following people recently received promotions: Nylsea Collazo, Teresa Anthony, Nancy Lockard, Ann Haase. Congratulations to the following people on their recent selections: Keva Crossen and Jolyn Nace were both selected as purchasing agents for the Procurement Operations Division.

New Faces: Lee Cetorelli, Alicia Joyner, Claudia Womble, and Donna Broderick. Welcome new Co-ops LaMar Hortman and Christopher Torrance

Farewell: Karen Weaver to HQ, Simone Rollings to NSA, Kim Tann to Code 400 within GSFC,

The list of **People on the Move** 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 e-mail at [susie.marucci@nasa.gov](mailto:susie.marucci@nasa.gov).

(continued on page 4)

# A Fresh Perspective

By David Vance, Glenn Research Center

As a member of the NASA Contracting Intern Program (NCIP) 2003 Class and still an infant in the world of Procurement, I did not know what to expect at this year's training conference. Leaving from Cleveland, I knew I could count on warmer temperatures. After visiting JW Marriot's website, I knew the accommodations would be first-rate. With a bunch of my friends going from CON101 and Glenn, I knew the off hours would be a good time. The only unknown was the actual conference. I am happy to report, it was both an enlightening and informative three days.

The conference did have an inauspicious start as NASA Administrator, Sean O'Keefe, was detained and unable to speak at the opening ceremonies. In his place, however, the Deputy Administrator, Frederick Gregory, did a fine job. Paul Pastorek,

NASA General Counsel, spoke next and gave a fitting speech emphasizing the importance of teamwork. It was this message of teamwork that I found to be the foundation of the conference.

Of all the different events, the various workshop sessions provided the greatest benefit. In my short time with NASA, it sometimes feels as though the centers are competing against one another, instead of working together for the greater good of the Agency. But during the workshops the centers seemed to come together. It was there the greatest amount of idea sharing took place. Even though a few workshops bordered on complaint sessions, overall they provided an excellent forum for each center to describe their strengths and how they can be incorporated into the whole.

Each center clearly has its own way of doing things. The

conference, particularly the workshops, provided an exceptional outlet for each center to share its unique methods and ideas. Ideally, each center was able to take back a few new processes to improve its organization and create a better Office of Procurement for NASA as a whole. As cliché as it may sound, the idea of One NASA was evident in Orlando.

Part of NASA's beauty is in the differences between the centers, procurement included. We need to embrace our diversity and use it to benefit our organization. As we move forward into these exciting times, I look to the words of Henry Ford who said; "Coming together is a beginning - keeping together is progress - working together is success." The conference gave us an opportunity to come together now let's keep together, and work together towards success.

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## People on the Move

*(continued from page 3)*

Kelly Boos to GRC, Lashonda Goodwyn to HQ, Harold Coleman to KSC, Mary Stevens to HQ, James Becker to HQ, Jerry Edmond to HQ, and Barbara Hammond to EPA.

### KSC

Congratulations: The following KSC Procurement Office personnel have been recognized in various ways: Teri Jackson was awarded the prestigious NASA Midrange/Commercial Person of the Year Award at the recent Procurement Conference in Orlando Florida. (See more on page 16.) Steve Parker has accepted a Congressional Fellowship assignment in Washington DC. Steve will be supporting Florida's very own Senator Bill Nelson working space issues and policies on the senator's staff in DC.

New Faces: KSC extends a warm welcome to our newest employees: Bradley O'Toole joins the

Mission Support Office team from the Boeing Company. Cynthia Pettiford comes to the Procurement Office from the KSC Press Site and joins the Acquisition Management Office. Emily Unbehaun is an NCIP (NASA Contracting Intern Program) participant and just started a 19-month rotation at the Kennedy Space Center. She just graduated from the University of Wisconsin after completing four co-op tours in the Procurement Office at the Johnson Space Center prior to her arrival at KSC.

Farewell: Alas, we must bid farewell to the following OP employees: Thomas Tokmenko relocated to Langley. Steven Horn returned to the KSC Legal Office. Julie Caimi left the Procurement Office after seven years. Her new position is in the Kennedy Space Center Orbital Space Plane Office. Ember Smith left the Procurement Office after seven years. Her new position is in the Shuttle Processing Directorate as an administrative support staff responsible for Employee Awards.

# The Real Value

By Ron Sepesi, Glenn Research Center

It has been some weeks since the Procurement Training Conference in Orlando and I believe everyone who was present would agree it was a glowing success. Having attended all of the previous Training Conferences in Tyson Corners, the steady improvements in each event has been readily apparent. The planning committee should be commended. The bar has been raised for the next event, and I am eager to see what improvements await the procurement community.

It strikes me that the value of the conference may not only be in the sharing of procurement information, presentations by senior officials, or even the highly anticipated, sometimes biting “State of Procurement” by Tom Luedtke (which somehow went missing during this event) but rather the real benefit is helping to remove the barriers to a “One NASA Procurement.”

Let’s be honest, there is a strong competition between centers! Being named “lead center” (a term which has recently been eliminated) for the highly visible, important programs is a designation each center relishes. There are only a limited number of highly visible programs and being named lead center supports our existence and acknowledges our competence. This competition can extend down to the procurement community. While competition is healthy, it can also erect artificial barriers to the free flow of information and a “One NASA Procurement.” We all believe we write the best contracts; solve the most convoluted contract administration

issues; and have identified that unique “best practice” to expedite evaluation, selection, and award. However, I am pretty sure that I can learn a lot from the other centers, and they could learn a lot from GRC. The topic specific presentations at the conference reinforce the fact there are a multitude of good people and good ideas at the Agency. However, barriers in sharing those good ideas at the worker level exist due to distance, perceptions of center/



*Putting names to faces during a break.*

HQ competence, finding the right person to talk to, etc.

The training conference can break down those barriers. It provides a name with a face, a point of contact, a colleague who may have solved the same problem you now face. The topic specific presentations reinforce the fact that creative thinking abounds in the Agency. The challenge is to foster the exchange of those creative ideas and for centers to acknowledge the fact that others may indeed know more than me! The “not invented here” syndrome is strong within the Agency.

A strong “One NASA Procurement” would do as much to disseminate its success as well as

it challenges (it’s hard to use the word “failure”). It would spread practical information at the worker level where the information is needed most. It would be more honest with itself in acknowledging those less than successful procurements. We often learn more from the less than successful procurements.

A few years ago GRC was in a re-compete mode for two BOSS like contracts. The initial “buzz” from Code H told of a BOSS success story, and I was challenged by the words “...JSC can do that, why can’t you?” So we visited JSC! To their credit, the BOSS CO and COTR were more than willing to share their contract challenges. This honest feedback influenced our procurement strategy and helped make our local procurements more successful.

It strikes me that the Procurement Officers interact on a structured basis with telecons and annual conferences. I may meet a branch chief counterpart at this type of conference every two years. Is that enough to share good information? I have interacted with my counterparts and friends at LaRC to discuss business practices often over the last few years. I find it helps to calibrate my thinking. I always walk away with a few interesting ideas. Smaller function specific sessions led by the Code H representative responsible for that part of the FAR could be beneficial. More sharing of practical information at the worker level is an idea that needs to be nurtured and supported if we are to move to a “One NASA Procurement.”

## A Closer Look:

# Life as an NCIP Intern

By Tasha Davis, Marshall Space Flight Center

I, Tasha L. Davis, am a native of Birmingham, Alabama. I received my Bachelors of Science degree in Accounting from Alabama A&M University. I'm currently working as a Contract Specialist at Marshall Space Flight Center in the Procurement Office supporting the Science and Center Operations Support Department. I initially joined the Agency as an NCIP Intern in August 2003. Life as an intern at MSFC has been nothing short of a vast learning experience and opportunity.

My experience as a NCIP Intern has been very positive. There were the usual mishaps for working for the government such as: getting situated, passwords, and finding my way around. However, the department personnel I was working with made me feel very welcome and comfortable. I had a lot to learn about procurement. I was fresh out of school. I had very little training and/or experience in Procurement. The first week with the Agency, I attended a NASA Headquarters sponsored Contracting 101 Class in Virginia Beach, VA. This class provided a broad idea as to what procurement was and defined some of the roles and duties of a contract specialist. With this training completed, I still had no idea of what to expect once I began my first assignment at MSFC.

To assist in my learning, the procurement department manager and team lead assigned me a mentor, a well skilled contract specialist. However, as an intern I was very nervous about becoming a burden to someone who had his

own workload to accomplish. My mentor didn't mind taking me under his wing. In fact, no one in my department was bothered by my inquisitive spirit and child-like excitement. Everyone that I met at MSFC, whether in procurement or not, made sure that if I needed anything and they could help, they would help or at least point me in the right direction.

My primary challenge, at this point, was learning as much as I could without being a burden or being redundant in my questions. As I continued to learn and take notes, my mentor began letting me handle certain actions by myself. I am beginning to feel more confident in the actions I am



allowed to procure and feel that I am a contributing team member. I have worked on the following procurement actions: SATs (Small Acquisition Thresholds), modifications on various types of contracts, purchase orders, cooperative agreements, and grants. I have also made several acquisitions using GSA. Most recently, I have been involved in closing out purchase orders.

Since joining MSFC, I have been given the opportunity to go to all sorts of training, one of which was the Procurement Training

Conference. At the conference, I was able to see the overall vision of NASA through the eyes of procurement. I met so many individuals that have been with NASA for numerous years, and they were still excited to be a part of an organization so great in spirit and success.

I have enjoyed the steps that I have taken to get where I am today. My future as an NCIP intern is very promising. The program is only two and a half years. This summer I will relocate to Johnson Space Center. I am very excited about the move and feel that it will be another challenge awaiting me. This move will increase my experience base and expand my knowledge as a contract specialist. The goal of the NCIP program is to allow interns, like me, to gain a vast amount of experience in a variety of areas, equipping us with the tools necessary to one day become contracting officers. I have enjoyed my stay at MSFC, and probably won't be ready to leave this summer. I am looking forward to an exciting future at other NASA centers.

## What's It All About:

# The Stennis Acquisition Management Office

When Susie Marucci sent the call for articles for this edition of the Procurement Countdown, there was an assignment for Stennis Space Center (SSC) to write a Group/Team/Office article. Rather than focus on a smaller team, this article is about the entire SSC Acquisition Management Office (AMO). It is a great example of this category because of the broad and diverse duties that this group of employees must accomplish to support the NASA mission.

The AMO is part of a larger organization, the Business Management Directorate (BMD). The BMD provides key business services to the center organizations and resident agencies. It was formed during the Center's reorganization in 2002. The BMD consists of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Acquisition Management Office, and the Business Support Office. The AMO consists of three groups: the Operations Contracting Division, the Support Services Contract Division, and Policy and Pricing. Each reports to the Procurement Officer, Rebecca Dubuisson and the Deputy Procurement Officer, Nick Etheridge. The Operations Contracting Division, led by Jim Huk, procures primarily the large commodity items, equipment, selected grants, cooperative agreements, construction, and some other service type requirements. The Support Services Contract Division, led by Susan Dupuis, supports the large facilities, technical, and other support service contracts for the center. These include the Facility Operating Services, Test and Technical Services, Hardware

Assurance Testing, and Security Services Contracts.

The organization is staffed by a total of eighteen employees. We also have two NCIP interns assigned to SSC, as well as several support contractors providing processing invoicing, data entry, and closeout support. Because the organization is small, all employees are key to successful mission support. AMO employees are highly educated, with a significant number of employees holding postgraduate degrees. The opportunity to experience all facets of the contracting process is available to AMO employees and provides us a mechanism for developing seasoned, well-rounded procurement professionals. These diverse opportunities create an interesting work environment because it allows each of us to bounce ideas off of each other when the more challenging day-to-day events are unfolding. It also is a necessity due to the ever-changing roles that a person can hold during a "normal" business day.

Each person in the AMO wears several hats. This is definitely not an office where you do the same thing over and over. Each person is integral and necessary to the successful operation of the office. When you have a few people in an office that covers as many different areas and programs as NASA requires it to cover, it becomes difficult when details, TDYs, sick leave, vacations and other out of office experiences occur. Our folks are cross-trained and versatile in several areas so they are prepared to step in when necessary. It is not uncommon to

be on a telephone conference call one minute and then walk immediately into the PO's office to discuss any update that you just received. Because we have ready access to our leaders, decisions can be made quickly.

While the AMO is small, we have a large mission in supporting a variety of NASA programs. For those of you that have never been to SSC, it is a diverse center that has thirty-eight different resident agencies and nearly 60 technology-based companies housed here. SSC is the host to the other agencies. This synergy leads to the sharing of costs, services, and technical capabilities that make Stennis a national model of teamwork and government cost effectiveness. SSC has a workforce of 4,600 including 1,700 scientists and engineers engaged in rocket propulsion testing, earth science applications, and national defense programs.

This sums up a typical workday at SSC AMO: "It is like a merry-go-round constantly spinning. You jump on in the morning and sometimes you do not know exactly where it will take you during the day." To work here, you have to be ready to adapt, flex, and roll with the flow. Working in this situation really strengthens you for the future. Working at SSC is a very interesting and huge learning experience every day.

The AMO is a small but mighty organization of acquisition professionals who exemplify teamwork and a positive customer care attitude and stand ready to tackle any acquisition issue or task in support of our customers.

# Enjoying the Conference

By Claudia Womble, Goddard Space Flight Center

Sunny, warm, luxurious, organized, informative – all of those describe NASA’s Procurement Conference 2003, which was held December 2 - 4, 2003 in Orlando at the JW Marriott Orlando, Grande Lakes – a brilliantly designed facility with tropical landscaping. After leaving the cold weather of the Washington DC Metro area, the location of the facility was breathtaking. The facility was awesome and was a more than pleasurable environment to stay in when away from home for four days.

The registration was quick and organized where the name tags with the respective centers were ready for pick-up. The leather portfolios contained information about tourist attractions to Orlando and even the schedule of workshop sessions; idea markets and the awards



*IG Robert Cobb*

banquet for the week.

Yolande Harden, Code HK, opened each morning session with brief announcements of conference logistics for that day and introduced the morning speakers. The speakers for the morning sessions included Deputy Administrator Fred Gregory; Robert Cobb, NASA Inspector General; and James Jennings, Associate Deputy Administrator for Institu-

tions & Asset Management. The speakers briefed us on the current issues for the Agency which included the CAIB report, moving from tragedy to triumph, and how procurement is vital to NASA’s success as an Agency, (40 percent of the attorneys at



*Jim Jennings*

NASA work for procurement), transitioning to One NASA, GAO protests, NASA’s organizational structure, NSSC and its impact and scheduling, and how progressing to the SES rank within the Agency now requires service to more than one center.

The conference provided a variety of methods to deliver information to all of the attendees. All of the sessions were very informative. There was one that to me stood out as being extremely informative and interesting. It was the session entitled, “Successful Debriefings & Source Selection Statements” with Jeff Cullen, Jim Huk, David Sudduth and Sumara Thompson-King as the presenters. There was an excellent discussion regarding debriefings focusing on disseminating “all” information versus only “major deficiencies.” Ms. Thompson-King handed out the proposed “Drafting the Source Selection Statement: A Practical Guide” and the proposed “NASA

Procurement Debriefings Guide: A Practical Guide for Conducting NASA Debriefings.” The message from Ms. Thompson-King was to clearly communicate and disclose “all” deficiencies when conducting debriefings to unsuccessful offerors. This, she said, ultimately minimizes the number of protests to the Agency. In addition, it is not just the history of the procurement in the source selection statement that is important; but, clearly explaining in the documentation the trade-off analysis that was done. This was a key point of this session.

The idea market summaries provided an opportunity for



*The Morning Audience*

brainstorming on different topics to voice concerns, raise issues, and offer recommendations on current issues. The idea markets addressed the issues of acquisition workforce, Headquarters/center relations, subcontract consent process, cost performance evaluations, oral proposals-practical applications, conducting effective EVM analysis, analyzing the 533 reports, effective subcontract surveillance/management, best value evaluations, service contracting and effective fee evaluations. These sessions were held in



the late afternoons for the first two days of the conference with the third day reserved for the reporting of the results of the sessions.

During the evening of the second day of the conference was the Procurement Training Conference Awards Banquet. Awards were presented to various employees across the centers in the following categories: Contract Manager of the Year, Contract Specialist of the Year, Simplified Acquisition Specialist of the Year, Mid/Range/Commercial Person of the Year, Grants Specialist of the Year, Procurement Analyst of the Year, Procurement Support Person of the Year, Procurement Supervisor of the Year and Contract Officer's Technical Representative of the Year, (see page 16 for more detail). As a GSFC employee in Headquarters Procurement Office, 210.H, the highlight of the awards banquet and conference was to congratulate the Grants Specialist of the Year, Tracey Jones, who is from my office! As her name was called, the GSFC attendees resoundingly cheered (and banged on the table) for our colleague. At the end of awards banquet, we took a group picture and our smiling cheese word was "Tracey." Tom Luedtke presented his state of procurement address, which was succinct, timely, and informative. Yolande Harden gave closing remarks.

The opportunity was made available to those wanting to tour the Kennedy Space Center. For those of us at GSFC, the imminence of a snow storm in the

Washington, DC area changed flight plans to safely return home, so we missed the tour. I enjoyed the weather and amenities of the hotel and Orlando. However, flying to Baltimore-Washington International airport and having to



*Tom Luedtke presides over the awards banquet.*

wait in the air while they de-iced the runway, I was glad to safely arrive home. This conference was well organized and informative. The diversity of the delivery

of the information was effective – speakers, workshops, and idea markets. It was very timely to me as a new employee to NASA, to have an opportunity to see the procurement function as a whole for the Agency. I met people from GSFC as well as employees from other centers. I also had an opportunity to introduce myself to the Assistant Administrator for Procurement. Hats off to Yolande Harden for a great job in organizing and executing such an effective conference, for sharing information to meet an Agency's goal of creating a "One NASA."

## Department of Labor Unveils New Wage Site

The Department of Labor (DOL) recently unveiled a new website, [www.wdol.gov](http://www.wdol.gov). It provides federal contracting officers with a single location for obtaining labor standards as well as Service Contract Act (SCA) and Davis-Bacon Act wage determinations. The laws generally require federal contractors to pay their employees the wage set by DOL for each job category and location. The website is also available to the general public.

There is a User's Guide to help in selecting wage determinations from the website. The site also provides contracting officers with direct access to the DOL's "e98" website to submit requests for SCA wage determinations. DOL will respond with SCA wage determinations through the e98 system.

The new website was rolled out under OMB's Integrated Acquisition Environment, an eGov initiative.

# Buying “Green” For The Government: The Affirmative Procurement (AP) Workshop

By Chris Pino, Kennedy Space Center

Because of NASA’s role as a leader in earth and space science, the American public should regard NASA as one of the principal agencies for safeguarding our environment. That was the message from NASA Administrator Sean O’Keefe in a new training film on Environmental Management Systems. Participants at the Procurement Conference 2003 Workshop for Affirmative Procurement (AP) viewed the film and participated in the workshop led by Patrick Flynn (Code HK) and Mike McNeill (Code JE) from NASA Headquarters. The message is clear – the entire acquisition team must be serious about using the purchasing power of the federal government to reduce the environmental and human health impacts of the products we procure. Because of the billions of dollars in supplies that the US government purchases each year, the impact of switching to recycled content and environmentally friendly products is considerable.

One important topic discussed during the workshop was the issue of responsibility for initial identification of items being procured as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated products. The EPA Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG) specify that government purchases of designated items must contain specific amounts of recovered materials at a minimum, unless a request for waiver or justification documentation has been processed. Although it is the duty of

the requiring official (procurement initiator) to indicate on the procurement request that an item is an EPA designated item, contracting officers need to be familiar with these items as well in order to accurately perform market research and buy the correct item. EPA maintains the list of these products in its CPG, which can be accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/cpg>. Contracting officers are also responsible for ensuring support services contracts at NASA sites contain the proper clauses and



*Patrick Flynn presents during the AP Workshop*

specifications. Refer to PIC 01-27 for details.

One challenge for the NASA acquisition team is to gain a thorough understanding of AP regulations. To this end, new SOLAR training is being developed for release next year. In the meantime, plenty of websites are available. Since KSC is the principal center in recycling and AP for NASA, a good place to begin is the KSC website at <http://environmental.ksc.nasa.gov/recycle/intro.cfm>. A list of pertinent regulations is just one of the links available on this website.

A recent advance for Affirmative Procurement is the incorporation of EPA guidelines into SPECSINTACT for construction contracts. SPECSINTACT is software used to generate specifications for construction projects. SPEC writers can now automatically generate specifications that comply with the most up-to-date federal procurement regulations for Affirmative Procurement and EPA requirements.

The Workshop on Affirmative Procurement conveyed the message that NASA must meet the challenge of training its acquisition team on AP. Resources and support to help execute this program are now available. As key members of the acquisition team, we serve a vital role in steering suppliers to provide more environmentally friendly products. That’s something we can all feel good about!

## Did you know?

The Procurement Conference charts, agenda, photos and more are on the Procurement Library website?

They can be found at:  
<http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/conf2003/confindex2003.html>

# Participating in the NCIP Functional Breakout Session

By Christopher J. Grubbe, Kennedy Space Center

As a new contracting officer to NASA and taking part in my first NASA Procurement Conference, I was surprised at the number of talented and respected contracting personnel, the variety of guest speakers, and lastly the vast opportunities offered to participate in training that was designed around real-world events.

I selected to participate in the NCIP Functional Breakout Session because I took part in a similar program at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and wanted to see how NASA was preparing their interns to be the contracting specialists/officers of the future. NASA NCIP program is by far the better of the two programs. However, I am not saying that the intern program I graduated from many years ago was not good, but in my opinion NASA's program is that much better. The NCIP program is designed to maximize diversity in training to allow the intern more opportunities to participate and be part of real world contracting issues.

The session was outlined with a very straightforward agenda, and was open for some very good dialogue between center representatives and the interns. I enjoyed the fact that the interns themselves were granted the opportunity to be located at the same place and at the same time to meet each other, and voice their opinions on a program that effects both their personal and professional development. I found that some of the agenda topics seem to be presented with little or no comments and/or discussion, and

that one or two topics seem to get a severe hold of the intern's attention. All of the interns gave me the impression they were very interested in topics that discussed their future assignments, program improvements for the future, and how they would like to have access to more complex workload at their training center.

In addition, I was impressed with the presentation made by Daniel Burk graduating intern at



*The NCIP Breakout session*

Langley Research Center. Mr. Burk presented an idea that each intern should rotate through a research and development center on the first rotation, and then move onto a mission or space center for the final rotation. In my professional opinion, I thought this to be an excellent training proposal for both the intern and NASA as a whole. It would allow NASA to train and develop future contracting professionals that will have a very well rounded education in all types and aspects of the procurement process. Working at a smaller center shall allow more time to hone and develop the required skills needed to become an active member on more complex procurement actions.

In writing this article, I wanted to get some comments from the interns themselves to see if they were as impressed as I was in the overall outcome of this session of the procurement conference. Thanks to Yolande Harden, I was afforded the opportunity to solicit comments from a diverse group of interns who took part in this session. Although I received several distinct remarks from the interns questioned, there was one theme that was continuous in all of their comments: This session was extremely helpful, informative, and valuable in their professional development.

In looking back, I found this session to be a very satisfying and worthwhile experience for all who attended. However, I believe that future NCIP sessions could be even better by addressing some minor issues that were raised as a result of my survey of current interns. There should be more time allotted to discuss key agenda topics, more center representatives to discuss roles and responsibilities, and additional representation from each center involved in future programming changes.

In closing, I would like to state how very impressed I was with the diversity in personnel within the NCIP program, its leadership, and all of the interns that were present. Furthermore, I look forward to working together with all of my future colleagues on all aspects of contracting and procurement functions.

# A Great Conference, A Great Place

By Lisa Rea Phillips, Johnson Space Center

When the request came out to see who would be interested in this year's procurement conference, I thought I might actually pick up some useful information, so I sent my name in. My office will be doing our first solicitation/contract award using oral proposals this spring. I thought I might pick up some information about that process, if nothing else. Then when I got the note about the location of the conference, I was REALLY interested. Fortunately, I was lucky enough to be selected to attend, and felt especially lucky



*Jeff Cullen presents at the Source Selection Breakout session*

when I actually arrived and saw how nice the hotel was!

I attended the sessions with the keynote speakers and enjoyed hearing about what is going on at that higher level of NASA, which we don't always get insight into at the working level. While the keynote speeches were interesting, I really enjoyed and learned the most from the subject matter breakout sessions. The smaller format allowed a more lively exchange of ideas and points of view than the larger sessions. I attended quite a few of the breakout sessions – pricing, career development, the policy breakout session, IDIQ lessons learned, major acquisition strategies, source selection/debriefing

process and, of course, oral proposals. The two that were most useful to my immediate work needs were the source selection/debriefing and the oral proposal sessions.

In the source selection and debriefing session, they discussed the upcoming changes to the regs which will require a different way of writing the source selection statements and of conducting debriefings. It was great to get a real-time explanation of the guidance as it was coming out, and get some insight into the background of the changes being made to this procedure. So many times, you get new guidance and can't understand why on earth a change is being made.

The most important points that I gathered from Sumara Thompson-King's comments were that we need to spend more time on the reason why a decision was made and describe in detail the thought processes that went into a selection. This is in lieu of the current tendency to describe the background information in eye watering detail, and then giving the rational for the selection decision short shrift. And then in debriefings, she said that more disclosure is better than less. The requirement to debrief the winner is going to be a really different way of doing business! These changes did cause a lot of discussion among the attendees of the session, and not everyone was completely happy with the changes. It'll be interesting to see what happens with this over time.

The oral proposal session was good for several reasons. First, there were folks in attendance who had actually completed this

process; so it was good to get some "real life, here's what to watch out for" type feedback.

We discussed the pros and cons of various approaches like getting all information in an oral format, some of it in written format, and whether or not to record presentations. The folks in my session had some good thoughts on what might work, and we agreed that how much information you get in the verbal presentation depends on what sort of hardware or service you are buying. It seemed like the best



*Conference attendees learning and enjoying it*

results were achieved when the item being purchased wasn't too complicated. In those cases it lent itself to full description in a chart format. Very complicated, state of the art, technical type procurements didn't seem to lend themselves to this style of proposal development. It also turned out that someone who had conducted these type of procurements several times works just down the hall from me, but I didn't realize it because he had gained this experience through other jobs he had held. So it was kind of funny

*(continued on page 14)*

# So You're Going To Orlando

By Pam Taylor, Wallops Flight Facility

One afternoon on a day in November...

It's one day of many I'll always remember!  
Bernie said, "See me! For you I have news."  
OK, should I smile or be singing the blues!?!

I walked in and sat down and he sat down too.  
He stated I have good news and bad news for you.  
I said give me the bad news. I want the worst first.  
The good would be better if I first heard the worst.

He said, "A presentation is what you must give."  
Well, if that is the bad news, I surely will live.  
The topic is contracts with Award Terms in them  
You bet, I can talk about all the WICC mayhem.

So if that's the bad news, what is the good?  
I might be much happier than maybe I should.  
So I braced myself like an Army commando.  
He says, "You'll give that speech in Orlando!!"  
To Florida??? In December??? I've gone to Heaven.  
My ticket said: From Salisbury—Leaving at 11.

I got to Orlando and pulled off my coat.  
I saw palm trees, a Disney bus, even a boat.  
A van picked me up and went to the hotel.  
I tell you the J.W. Marriott is swell!!!!  
I went to my room on Floor 23.  
The sun was setting. A view just for me!!

I know with Disney, warm weather and all  
You think all we did there was have a big ball.  
But work was on the agenda for us  
And it started on Tuesday without any fuss.

Yolande was "hostess" for all the events.  
She fixed all the problems and made stuff make sense.  
Tom Luedtke stepped up to greet us in turn  
He said "Are you ready? There is much we will learn."  
He stated the speakers would all be the best.  
He said to enjoy but there's no time to rest.

Sean O'Keefe could not make it, so instead  
He sent Mr. Gregory who filled up our head  
With ideas and thoughts about where we are now  
And where we are going, with who, when, and how.

Then came the workshops—Oh! which ones to choose?  
Information was all 'round. How could you lose?  
IDIQ was the first place I went.  
It was great to hear all the other folks vent  
'Bout solutions they tried and what they found.  
With these contracts I learned, we are making ground.  
We are learning to manage to our best ability.  
As lessons learned add to their greater utility.

SAP: Tips and Tricks and Workaround  
Told us don't get discouraged, solutions abound.  
Some things will go and some things will stay  
And some things will just remain that way.  
New systems and changes—to these we adjust.  
It's onward and upward—LEARN SAP OR BUST!!!

One of my favorites was Surveillance Plans.  
The speaker, a friend, held change in her hands.  
She is one of the people who had to adjust  
As a result of the shuttle crash, it is a must  
For the government to take more active roles  
To oversee shuttles carrying Astronaut Souls.

Affirmative Procurement and the Environment too  
Is a great way to help Mother Earth to pull through.  
We are in times that use up Her natural resources  
To pull Her through will need all of our forces.  
We must act in ways to preserve and conserve.  
We will need to think globally and try to reserve.  
We need the trees, the air and the water  
For our children, and ourselves, conserve we outter!!

The Shared Service Center was next on my list.  
An interesting concept, if I got the gist.  
Similar functions that all NASA does  
Put all in one central place because  
It is much more efficient and it costs less too.  
I wonder, will the center be near me or you?

Last, but not least, the last day of my stay  
To Kennedy Space Center we made our way.  
We saw a launch pad and the shuttle itself.  
We went to the Gift Shop, cleared more than one shelf.  
We stood and we walked where the Astronauts do.

*(continued on page 14)*

# Orlando Poem

*(continued from page 13)*

We saw pay loads from Italy for the Space Station too.  
We thought our own thoughts, with lots on our mind.  
NASA moves toward a future for all of mankind.  
We stopped and we ate as we went on our way.  
I tell you it was just a “Sweet, awesome day.”

We worked very hard, the days flew on by.  
But I have a confession so here I will try  
To name just a few of some other events  
That we also could choose—now NO rude comments!  
We swam and we sat in the hot tub to rest.

The fella who brought us our drinks was the best.  
We could exercise, golf and walk till we hurt.  
We could eat, O BOY, the best was dessert.

Now this is the place where my story ends.  
We worked and we played and we made some new  
friends.  
So from now on when there is bad news and good.  
You know what to do or at least you should.  
Don’t hesitate, don’t fear, my friend, you can lick it!!  
Just smile and say thank you and go get your ticket!!!

# A Great Conference, A Great Place

*(continued from page 12)*

that I had to travel four hours by plane to find someone that works just around the corner!

The other session that provided good information to use in the future was the career development session. The requirement that SES level employees have experience at multiple centers and complete rotational assignments was discussed vigorously. It came out during the discussion that there is an effort ongoing to improve the education with industry experience by finding companies closer to the various centers. That way people could experience a rotational assignment without uprooting their entire family. Deborah O’Neill said that they have very few applicants to the education with industry program. So if you submit an application, you might have a good chance of getting in! We also talked about changes to the CON training which many of the folks in the session wanted to know about.

All in all, I learned quite a bit during the three-day event. And I did enjoy the facility, which was quite surprisingly luxurious considering this was, after all,

an event paid for by the government. So, I would definitely go again to a future procurement conference, if I had the chance. . . .

Especially if I get a note saying it’s in a really nice hotel in a sunny location.



*Hanging out at the hotel*

# GRC's 2003 Procurement Award Winners

## Tim Pierce

Tim was awarded Contract Manager of the Year for his assignment to support the procurement needs of the Next Generation Launch Technology (NGLT) Program, a major Agency initiative. Tim has shown exceptional creativity and perception in conducting two back-to-back contract restructures. He has effectively managed these contracts and projects, by establishing good working relationships with the CO and COTR's at other centers, obtaining their confidence in his abilities to represent them in dealing with contractors. Tim is to be commended for effectively performing CO management functions, without having formal signatory authority due to the program structure.

## Ron Sepesi

Ron was awarded Supervisor of the Year for his outstanding support to his Branch customers, the Procurement Division, the GRC, and the Agency. During this period, the Services and Construction Branch lost 25 percent of its staff because of promotions or developmental assignments. He became personally involved in three critical re-procurements, assumed additional contract administration responsibilities, redistributed workload to take advantage of his staff's individual areas of expertise, and obtained increases in productivity from various individuals through frequent, direct, and personal interaction. In addition, Ron was an active and respected member of the Agency's NSSC Procurement Team, a major supporter of the Center's Socio-economic goals, and the lead in the division's office space downsizing effort.

## Kurt Straub

Kurt was awarded Procurement Analyst of the Year for his dedication, initiative, analytical and problem solving skills, and cooperation and leadership as a GRC Core Financial Module Super User. He is a recognized center and Agency expert in matters pertain to the structuring of large complex multi-year, multi-task contracts in post-IFMP implementation era and has worked with several other centers in explaining the process GRC uses. Kurt has demonstrated his willingness to do whatever it takes to get tasks done and has shown the initiative necessary to tackle a number of testing, conversation, and training problems as well as daily problems with the system after implementation.



*The GRC winners, from left, Ron Sepesi, Tim Pierce, and Kurt Straub.*



*Enjoying the awards banquet dinner.*

# Award Dinner

By Kathleen J. Huddleston, NASA Management Office, JPL

One of the big highlights of the Procurement Training conference was the award ceremony and dinner. How exciting to be honored at such an event! NASA is known for the quality of its personnel; however, procurement has its own over-achievers! Congratulations to the following awardees of the year:

Glenn Research Center: Timothy C. Pierce for Contract Manager; Kurt A. Straub for Procurement Analyst and Ronald W. Sepesi for Procurement Supervisor. (See more about their awards on page 15.)

Ames Research Center: Deborah E. Glass for Contract Specialist; Rachel R. Khattab for Contract Specialist.

Johnson Space Center: Marie D. Kliment for Simplified Acquisition Specialist

Kennedy Space Center: Teri Jackson for Mid-Range/Commercial Person

Goddard Space Flight Center: Tracey Jones for Grants Specialist

Langley Research Center: Randy A. Manning for Procurement Support Person

Marshall Space Flight Center: Robert H. Champion for COTR



*Award winners from upper left are, Randy Manning, Teri Jackson, Robert Champion, Deborah Glass (with Connie Cunningham holding the award for Rachel Khattab), and Tracey Jones.*



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## Procurement Countdown

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Editor.....Susie Marucci  
(202) 358-1896  
susie.marucci@nasa.gov