



# Procurement Countdown

## The New Guy

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When Bill McNally walked into the Office of Procurement as the new Assistant Administrator (AA), he was in an unusual position. He was the new kid. Sure, he's an experience procurement professional who has touched some of the most interesting programs in the government. Sure, he's worked on one of NASA's most important undertakings of all time, the "Vision for Space Exploration." As the Special Procurement Advisor in the Explorations Systems Mission Directorate (ESMD), he worked with the Office of Procurement at Headquarters as well as contracting personnel at some of the Centers. For all of that, he walked in that first day to an organization that was made up of people who knew their jobs and did them, but they didn't know him.

Whey Sheryl Goddard was the Acting AA, she had been a procurement analyst and a division director within the office. Everyone knew her and she knew everyone. When Tom Luedtke became the AA, he had been a division director and then the deputy AA. Everyone knew him and he knew everyone.

Then, Bill walked in. He didn't know most of the people and most of them didn't know him. It could have been a very uncomfortable position for everyone. Bill made sure it wasn't. He told people right away that he

had things he wanted to accomplish. Then he tempered it by letting them know he wasn't going to arbitrarily change things. He was going to listen to people. He wanted to understand why things were done the way they were. If it turned out the current



way was better, he was going to leave it alone. By sharing that insight, he turned a tense situation into a constructive one.

If you want to understand Bill, the most important thing to know is that he loves a challenge. That could be the result of his New York City upbringing and his die-hard love of the Yankees. Whatever caused it, he has put it to good use throughout the years.

### THE SPACE BUG

When Bill graduated from college, he joined the Air Force. His first job, at Vandenberg Air Force Base, started him on the path that would eventually lead to NASA. During his time at Vandenberg, he saw the space

experience up close. Bill was a contract administrator and industrial specialist to the Atlas program. He said it was a great experience because it was "hands-on" work on a program that was launching rockets. He wasn't sitting in an office far removed from the missions. He was right there. The space bug bit him hard. It made him want to work for NASA, but that was still years away.

After four years at Vandenberg, the Air Force chose him for an educational training program working in industry. He took off his uniform, put on a suit, and became a contractor. He wasn't an observer, he worked. During the months he was there, he wrote proposals, found contracts for his company, worked packages, and much more. He said the experience was really fascinating. It gave him practical knowledge of how contractors worked and why they did what they did. That knowledge would prove invaluable when he returned to the Air Force and throughout his career.

In looking back, Bill thinks one of the most important programs he worked on during his Air Force career was the Strategic Defense Initiative Program (SDI), also known as Star Wars. That is because of the success of the early technology

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projects. They demonstrated that a missile defense system was achievable and so helped bring about the fall of the Soviet Union.

According to Bill, part of the great thing about SDI was it gave him a chance to work with distinguished leaders like General Abramson, who went on to run the Space Shuttle office in its early days. Today, General Abramson is a member of the NASA Advisory Council. While Bill was the Director of Technology Contracts at SDI, he worked with the Director of Technology, a man named Mike Griffin. Working at SDI was a turning point in Bill's career. It reignited his love of space and working on space projects.

Bill continued to work on space-related contracting throughout the rest of his military career. In 2003, he retired from the Air

Force but wasn't ready to stay home playing golf. For one thing, life was too interesting. For another, one of his two sons was still at home getting ready for college. Bill went back to industry where, among his other jobs, he provided consulting advice to NASA as part of the Exploration Systems Architecture Study. That led to his changing from contractor to civil servant when, in 2005, he became the Special Procurement Advisor in the ESMD. He was there until he became the Assistant Administrator for Procurement in September.

Bill is as excited about working at NASA as he was when he dreamed about doing it. He loves the procurement challenges it brings. According to Bill, "There are always exciting and difficult things to do at NASA, especially

now." He continued, "NASA has three incredibly hard jobs right now, ending the Shuttle, continuing to build the Space Station, and starting a whole new project to get us to the Moon and beyond."

One of those alone would be challenge enough. The three combined keep NASA personnel working at a fever pitch. Bill thrives on it. He says that working at NASA, in some ways, reminds him of working at the Strategic Defense Initiative. As with SDI then, NASA has challenging work, does things that have never been done before, and has world class people who believe in the programs and flourish doing the work.

It's been a long journey from the time the space bug bit Bill McNally. But he'll be the first to say that the trip getting here was great, and it has been well worth the wait.

## A Few Things to Know About Your New AA

Never call him Mr. McNally. It is always Bill, except when he signs official documents. Then it is William P. McNally.

Bill sees us as an Agency, not as separate Centers. He wants all of us to work together.

Bill expects to work with all of the procurement people at NASA. He wants interaction back as well. He wants to see improved communication between people wherever there is a barrier.

If you have questions that can't be answered in your organization, Bill wants you to contact a procurement analyst at Headquarters. Ask questions, ask for clarifications. We're here to help.

Bill believes that while Headquarters is important, the Centers are critical. They write the contracts, not Headquarters. They are living the issues real time while Headquarters is providing guidance. As Bill said, the Centers are the "spear of our sword."



## People on the Move

### ARC

The Ames Acquisition Office continues to go through various personnel changes as people move into and out of the division.

**Congratulations:** The following individuals received promotions in 2007: Rhonda Baker, Patricia Hudson, Marianne Shelley, Rachel Khattab, Starr Strong, Robin Wong, Janessa Langford, Veronica Llamas, and Justin Pane. The following individuals were selected as the 2007 Ames Acquisition Division Peer Award winners: Patricia Hudson, Joanne Comstock, and Marianne Shelley. Dee Morrison, Ames Procurement Officer, received an Ames Honor Award. Dee was nominated and selected under the Supervisor/Manager category. Veronica Llamas, Ames contract specialist, was selected for the NASA Foundations of Influence, Relationship, Success, and Teamwork (FIRST) Program. This is a developmental program that aims to cultivate a community of prospective future leaders so that they will have a full understanding of the Agency's vision and mission areas.

**Farewell:** The Ames Acquisition Division said farewell to several individuals during the 2007 calendar year as a result of retirements or other career choices. These individuals had made significant contributions to the NASA mission and had been members of the NASA acquisition family for numerous years. The 2007 retirees were Charlie Ady and

## Thank You, Sheryl

As all of you know, the Office of Procurement has gone through some pretty big changes this year. Bill McNally is now the Assistant Administrator for Procurement. Tom Luedtke is the Associate Administrator for Institutions and Management. Between Tom's leaving and Bill's coming on board Sheryl Goddard stepped up to the plate and ran the Agency's procurement organization.

When Tom Luedtke was promoted, Sheryl was tapped to be the Acting Assistant Administrator. She had been a division director for less than a year. The job would be a big challenge for anyone. With little warning or time to prepare, Sheryl sat in the big chair. She kept the Office of Procurement stable during an unstable time. She had a full plate while in the job. She was the Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer. She worked closely with ESMD. She ran Procurement Management Surveys. She did so much more. Her work as the Acting AA was critical to NASA.

Sheryl did a terrific job. In September, she handed over a smoothly running organization to Bill McNally.

Sheryl, thank you for everything you did as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Procurement. The personal sacrifices you made and the long hours you put in are very much appreciated.

Robert Guerrero. Both men worked primarily on the facilities construction program in recent years. Additional losses included Gail Woll, Carlos Torrez, and Rhonda Baker who are pursuing other career options but remain with NASA Ames. Hanan Kim also left the division to pursue a private sector position in Southern California. We will miss these individuals immensely but wish them good luck in their new endeavors.

**New Faces:** We are very fortunate to have been able to pick up some talented contract specialists from other agencies. We would like to welcome the following 2007 additions to the Ames Acquisition team: Trupti Sanghani, Coast Guard; Manny Herrada, DoD; Elisban Rodriguez, DoD; Justin

Pane, DoD; and Ameka Chapman, NMO. Both Justin and Ameka are former NCIP interns who did rotations with Ames. We welcome them back. We would also like to welcome the following co-op interns who joined the program in 2007: Joseph Feizzadeh, Christine Benavides, Melissalyn Perkins, and Rachel Jandron.

### GRC

**Congratulations:** Contract specialist, Tim Pierce, GRC Procurement Division, received an Exceptional Service Medal this past summer. Over the past three years, he has awarded and supported the two largest onsite support service contracts – TIALS (Technical,

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 email at [susie.marucci@nasa.gov](mailto:susie.marucci@nasa.gov).

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# People on the Move

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Information, Administration, and Logistics Services) and GESS-2 (Glenn Engineering & Scientific Services). Tim has demonstrated an ability to adapt to change by making a successful transition to the new Procurement System, the Contract Management Module (CMM). Tim is one of the division's most frequent users of CMM. He has processed more than 700 contract actions in the system since it went live in November 2006. Tim has been at NASA for more than 16 years. During that time, he has demonstrated a continued commitment to support the procurement mission, the mission of the Glenn Research Center, and above all the mission of NASA. Sandra Gage was selected as the NASA Grants Specialist of the Year. Sandra was recognized by Tom Luedtke at the Procurement Training Conference Awards dinner in Long Beach, CA, last December. Over the past year, she has worked as a member of the CMM Templates team. She has also supported a design review of the NSSC grants award and transition process and successfully awarded the OAI Consolidated Cooperative Agreement. She has done all of this while maintaining her many other normal grants and contract responsibilities. Sandra has demonstrated a continued commitment to support the procurement mission, the mission of the Glenn Research Center and above all the mission of NASA. The GRC Procurement Division is proud of these award winners and looks forward to their continued success!

**Farewell:** Gary Golinski retired after 34 years in Procurement, 29 of which were with

NASA. Gary began his career at the Defense Electronics Supply Center in Dayton, OH. While at GRC, he made contributions to major programs such as the Launch Vehicles program and the High Speed Research program. He served as the contract specialist for NASA's first Science Institute and the National Center for Microgravity Research. Gary accepted a position with Highland Software, Westlake, OH, as the Government Contracts Administrator. Although we were sad to see him go, we are excited for the new opportunities his position will bring and wish him the best!

## GSFC

GSFC employees are being recognized and on the move. This was a stellar year of recognition for our procurement staff. We are proud of the following awards and honors recipients.

**Congratulations:** The following employees were recognized by the Center for their outstanding contributions as follows: LaShawn Davis, Diversity Enhancement; Cindy Stoltz, Outstanding Leadership; Delia Robey, Outstanding Management; and the Space Sciences Simplified Acquisition Team, Exceptional Achievement. The following personnel have been nominated for NASA Headquarters Medals: Tom Russell, Exceptional Achievement Medal; Hettie Courtney Outstanding Leadership Medal; and Delma Moore, Exceptional Service Medal. Michele Rook and Michelle Padfield were chosen for Space Flight Awareness Launch Honoree Awards. Lorrie Eakin was selected for the Center's Project

Management Development Enterprise program. PMDE is a developmental program established by Center management that provides the work experiences, training, guidance, and direction necessary for selected technical and professional administrative personnel to assume key management positions. The following people received Management Operations Directorate Awards: Teresa Anthony, Chris Whyte, Laurie Friederich, LaShawn Davis, Sandy Bruce, Lee Cetorelli, Delia Robey, Anetra Tucker, Veronica Okai, and the Wallops Procurement Office. The following individuals were promoted to Contract Specialist: Diana Jester, Cheryl Johnson, Yolanda Williams, Keisha Eldridge, Jonnelle Goff, Monica Price, Carol Dibble, and Jennifer Perez. The following individuals were promoted to Senior Contract Specialist: Ricarda Mason, Jonas McNair, Brenda Green, Geoff Sage, Darlene Dorsey, Jim Jones, Jonathon Wingerberg, Natesa Robinson, and Jennifer O'Connell. Michelle Connerton was promoted to Senior Contracting Officer.

**Farewell:** The GSFC procurement family wishes the best to the following employees: Andrew Dennis left Wallops and went to KSC. Jolyn Nace is on a detail to Public Affairs. Rachel McIntyre went to Treasury. Lisa Martin went to the Air Force. Klaus Sexton went to Homeland Security. Doris Wood went to the White House. Susan Richards went to NASA Headquarters. Ray James Sisneros went to the Department of Energy. Anetra Tucker went to Public Affairs.

**New Faces:** The GSFC procurement family welcomes the

following new hires: Audie Chesley from FEMA, Carlene Jackson from DOT/FTA, Karen Weaver from NASA Headquarters, Therese Patterson from the Air Force, Marybeth Evans from private industry, Sislyn Barrett from the DC Government, Denise Byrd from private industry, Lois McDuffee from NIH, Erika Eam from Department of Justice, and Lisa Mullen from private industry. Welcome to the following co-op students: Donald Gray, Howard University; Gustavo Malagon, Interamerican University; Ashley McQueen, University of Maryland; and Tracie Hill, Bowie State University. Welcome to the following people who are here on detail: Torey Stevenson from our Regional Finance Office, Greta McCommas from our Space Sciences Directorate, Linda Garufi, Rogenia Burton-Pendergast, and Kathi Thomas all from our Engineering Directorate.

This information is updated by Wanda Behnke and located on the GSFC Procurement Operations Division website at <http://code210.gsfc.nasa.gov>.

## HQ

**Congratulations:** Ron Crider and Jeff Lupis were recipients of the 2007 Headquarters Honor Awards. Jerry Edmond, Monica Manning, Mary Stevens, and Ken Sateriale were chosen for Space Flight Awareness Launch Honoree Awards.

**Farewell:** Lou Becker of the Contract Management Division has left the Office of Procurement to become the new Assistant Administrator for the Office of Internal Controls and Management Systems. We miss him already.

**New Faces:** Rosalia Toberman is temporarily with the Office of Procurement as part of her Leadership Development Program until the end of January.

## JSC

**Congratulations:** Dawn Alexander has been chosen to serve as the procurement lead on the Agency-wide NASA Protective Services SEB being conducted at KSC. Billy Autry was named the Deputy Manager of the Policy and Systems Office. Mary Kincaid was named Deputy Manager of the Institutional Procurement Office. Joe Campbell was selected as a team lead at the White Sands Test Facility (WSTF) Office. Krystine Bui was selected as team lead in the Shuttle Procurement Office. Larry Kenyon graduated from the Leadership Development Program. Jeff Cullen recently returned from a six-month rotation at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory as part of his Senior Executive Service Career Development Plan. Wendy Stone was chosen for NASA's Foundation of Influence, Relationships, Success, and Teamwork (FIRST) Program. Last year's graduate of the FIRST program was Irene Garcia of WSTF.

**Farewell:** Michael Ballard, Josh Soto, Colleen Burns, David Waterson, and Aaron Eason who left NASA to pursue other opportunities.

**New Faces:** Michael Duckworth and Roger Roberts joined the Procurement Office.

## LARC

**Farewell:** Lee Nadeau a contract specialist at LaRC for six years is now at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in

Atlanta, GA. Charles Wingate a contract specialist at LaRC for a little over a year is now at GSA in Atlanta, GA.

**New Faces:** Daphne Darden came to LaRC in December 2006 from Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair, United States Navy (SUPSHIP, Newport News). She is a price analyst in the Business Management branch. Fran Risinger came to LaRC in April 2007 from the National Transportation Safety Board. She is in the Center Operations branch. Shane Kram came to LaRC in April 2007 from Jefferson Labs. He is in the Research and Projects Contracting branch. Drena McIntosh came to LaRC in September 2007 from the Air Force Acquisition Management & Integration Center (AMIC). She works in the Center Operations branch. Octavia Hicks came to LaRC in January 2007 from the Air Force Flight Test Center. She is in the Center Operations branch. Sylvia Small came to LaRC in April 2007 from SUPSHIP, Newport News. She is in the Center Operations branch. Temple Moore is a Cooperative Education Student currently attending Thomas Nelson Community College. She supports the Center Operations branch.

## NMO

**Congratulations:** Congratulations to the following people who were recently promoted: Cheryl Williams, Gabriel Romero, and Rebecca Wilkinson.

**Farewell:** Ameka Chapman, who has returned to Ames Research Center; and Ron Sepesi, the Acting NMO Procurement Officer, who has returned to Glenn Research Center.

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# Foundations of Aerospace —

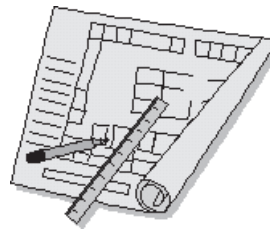
By Ron Backes, HQ Analysis Division and Don Moses, HQ Program Operations Division

NASA is truly an amazing Agency to work for. There are few agencies, and few careers, where you find a predominance of people who are dedicated to what they do simply because they love it. Whether you are driven by a love of science, exploration, or just building high-tech stuff and sending it up strapped to rockets with thousands of pounds of thrust, there are few other organizations in the world that offer what NASA offers. How do you adapt to a career at NASA? What is the magic formula for success?

The Foundations of Aerospace (FoA) course, the introductory course to the Academy of Program/Project & Engineering Leadership (APPEL) curriculum, is a course that helps to answer those questions and gives participants a taste of what NASA is about. The FoA course provides a basic understanding of program and project management at NASA. Attended by NASA engineers and those who support them, the FoA course is geared for new hires, both technical and non-technical. The two-week course focuses on providing participants with the “big picture” overview of NASA, its governance model and operations, and basic concepts of aeronautics and astronautics.

The FoA course contains much more. The topics range from an overview of NASA history, Mission Directorates, and the organization of NASA, to fundamental communication and team building skills. Presenters within the FoA course include top NASA leadership and world-renowned experts from outside NASA.

During the courses offered at Goddard in July 2007 and Langley in September 2007, Aeronautics and Astronautics were presented by Air Force Academy instructors. They not only knew the material, they lived it. Anyone who can take concepts as complex as fluid dynamics and orbital physics and render them sensible to a contracting-type truly “gets it.” Not only did the instructors exemplify mastery of the concepts, but they also brought energy and excitement



which infected the students. They provided a wealth of information and initiated thought-provoking discussions on aeronautics and space flight which left the non-technical students with a better understanding of and appreciation for NASA’s core competencies.

So what will the non-engineers get from the course that you can’t get from watching the Discovery Channel? One thing is the sense of connection. The course is what it is because NASA is what it is ... what we are. The sometimes agonizing culture of open discussion and questioning authority hits home when a group of dedicated engineers and scientists, all committed to a successful mission, disagree. It is within this crucible, through the

intense communication and team dynamics, that NASA’s reputation for excellence is nurtured. By understanding this dynamic and the tension that underlies it you gain a deeper appreciation for the needs and drives of our customers. You will feel a closer connection to the pulse of NASA.

## INVESTING WISELY

As with any great and noble endeavor, the return is proportional to the investment. In preparation for the FoA course, you will be given prework: interview three experienced engineers and write a one-page report on why they chose NASA, what they wish they knew when they started, and what they would impart to a new employee. NASA has some of the most brilliant minds of today and most of them are approachable. During one pre-work interview, Dr. Don Yeomans, senior research scientist and Manager for the Near-Earth Object Program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, related his passion for working here at NASA. “Today you can either look down to the bottom of the oceans or upward and outward,” he said. “The love for exploration, for trying new concepts, expanding the edge of knowledge, it is in my blood. If you find something that you love to do, you will work harder at it, and your devotion will ensure your success.” With regard to the second pre-work interview question, “what they wish they knew when they started,” the consensus among NASA engineers interviewed was to have had a better understanding of the NASA “big picture” earlier in their careers. This would have

# Foundations for Success

helped more than having “tunnel vision” and being strictly task focused. The advice they would provide new hires is to advance their technical, communication, and management skills; be sure to network, take advantage of the expertise around them; and work in different areas while staying focused on the NASA “big picture.” This type of insight can be obtained before setting foot in the classroom.

## PROBLEM SOLVING

Communication and team-building exercises pepper the two-week course. In one exercise, you are given the challenge of prioritizing the objectives for an international organization. Many people will likely jump right in and work to solve the world’s problems and possibly miss the point. It is easier to solve problems than to step back and look at the process you use to reach the solution. It seems like it is slowing you down, but investing the time to plan and understand the process results in better solutions and often saves time. However, it isn’t easy. When a group of brilliant scientists, engineers, and procurement professionals all short-circuit a discussion because of pressure to make the 45-minute deadline imposed by the facilitator, the lesson becomes clear: What would you do if the pressure were more “real?” What if you were the sole dissenting voice standing between a launch/no-launch decision? Part of the experience was to recognize your personal shortcomings. It is never a comfortable experience but

achieving that realization in a “safe” environment is invaluable.

So what can you do with this precious insight and knowledge? You may not be recognized as this generation’s Isaac Newton, but you may benefit from a deeper appreciation of what NASA is all about. You may come to know NASA’s “heart and mind.” You may begin to understand that what appears to be a convoluted and self-defeating decision-making process stems



from a unique culture and set of values. You may come to understand the composite of programs and projects that make the Agency special. You may gain an appreciation for what drives your customers. By grasping the basic concepts of Aeronautics and Astronautics, you may really be able to spell NASA.

There is no magic formula for success at NASA. Certain elements, however, are essential to enjoying a successful career. The FoA course highlights three. First, to be successful you must diversify your experience. Operational experience and support to projects and programs provides a sound foundation. They will reward you with a personal sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Once you

establish your technical reputation, seek to broaden your experience to include other Centers and Headquarters. Second, NASA is a collection of highly intelligent scientists, engineers, and professionals. Network with similarly-minded colleagues and explore together. Be a team player, collaborate with others, and build strong personal relationships across the Agency and across your field. Don’t get caught up in the way you would have decided something. Voice your opinion, even dissent up the chain as necessary. However, once a decision is made, support it. Don’t undermine a decision from within just because you would have done it differently. Finally, find something you love at NASA and do it over and over again.

In sharing our thoughts on success along with our experience at FoA, we highly recommend the course to procurement staff. You will gain a “foundation” of program and project management at NASA, a deeper understanding of NASA’s Mission and Vision for Space Exploration, an enhanced ability to communicate customer needs, and a “launch pad” for success at NASA. The course targets new NASA employees (tenured five years or less) but may be beneficial to longer tenured employees as well. Anyone interested in FoA can login to the SATERN website and view the course description, check out the schedule, and register at <https://satern.nasa.gov/elms/learner/login.jsp>.

# My Move to the Big City

By Ann Sharpe, HQ Program Operations Division

For many years, my career goal with the Federal Government had been to take a position in the Washington, DC, area. There is so much history in DC and its local commuting area. So much to see and do, so many theaters, museums, civil-war battlefields, historical homes, etc., etc., the list is all but endless. Now, that I have met my goal and have hands-on knowledge of the area, the list grows ever longer and longer of things I never knew existed.

My career with the Federal Government began with the Navy. While working for the Office of Naval Research detachments located at Stennis Space Center, with the Naval Ocean Research & Development Activity and then for the Naval Research Laboratory, I had many occasions to travel to DC. However, they were never long enough. These short business trips were just long enough to spark my interests in the area.

My career began as a procurement clerk. I took advantage of the educational opportunities through the Navy. At times, I attended college full-time at night and working full-time during the day. I was able to obtain a BS degree, and a Masters' degree. I then worked toward a Doctorate. As my education level grew, so did my career – until I reached a career ceiling with the Navy's procurement organization at Stennis. But, I simply couldn't let that stop me. That wasn't where I intended my career to end.

## GOING TO NASA

Career advancements in the same location, on-site at Stennis,

soon materialized as opportunities became available at NASA. In 1999, I was hired by the NASA/Stennis' Procurement Office as policy analyst, procurement-card coordinator, training coordinator, and ISO 9000 coordinator. I worked other areas including IEMP and activities that were not directly hands-on procurement. As my interests and involvement in NASA grew, so did my career. Soon I was



the Contracting Officer responsible for the Space Shuttle Program's test firing of the shuttle's main engines. This was a dynamic, dream job – and, what a team I work with – the COTRs, the program and project managers, the contract's management personnel! Working together, truly as a team, our work flowed like it never had before – meeting crucial deadlines and staying within the contract's cost limitations. Actually being there when engines were being tested, watching the 'fire and smoke,' then watching shuttles lift-offs – knowing I was a part of these historical endeavors – I'll always remember these activities and the people. I'm already sharing these memories with my grandchildren. Yet, as great as this was, there was still something missing.

## THE NSSC

While still a CO with the shuttle program, I was heavily

involved with the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) from the very beginning. Two years prior to NSSC's "go-live," I was on the NSSC Procurement Transition team and later with its change team. There were opportunities for further career advancements with this exciting new entity from the ground floor. I could be a part of it and, hopefully, make a difference. Best of all, Stennis was selected as the site where the NSSC would be built. I was the second procurement person hired by the NSSC. All on one location, onsite at Stennis, I had managed to progress from an entry level procurement clerk to a CO. I loved my job as CO over the NSSC's A-76 awarded contract – NASA's first public-private competition. It was the heart of the NSSC. I was there while the NSSC became a reality and grew and while over 300 contractor and government personnel were hired. Yet, there was still something missing that I longed to accomplish.

In 2006, an announcement for positions at NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement was released. This was what I'd been looking for. This had been my goal from years back. This was my opportunity to move to the big city, full of history, full of so much to see and do. Even better, this was my opportunity to work in the Headquarters Office of Procurement, side-by-side with people I'd known and worked remotely with for years.

## HAVING IT ALL

I had always secretly been curious about the aspects of NASA

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# A New Position Leads to Positive Results

By Deborah Ford, Langley Research Center

In February 2004, senior leadership at NASA Langley Research Center (LaRC) met to formulate the actions necessary to realign LaRC with President Bush's new Vision for Space Exploration. In order to achieve this focus, eight multidisciplinary teams were formed to look at both technical and institutional issues. One of the eight teams formed was the Culture Change team. The team focused on issues in the areas of values, leadership, communication, becoming a learning organization, and simplifying our internal processes by making them more customer-focused and user-friendly. The Culture Change team working with the Business Processes, Tools, and Techniques team identified the simplified acquisition process as a candidate for process improvement.

One recommendation from the team was the implementation of a new position titled PR Screener. That is my job. The goal of this position is to provide as much consistency as possible to the process by having a main point of entry for all commercial purchase requisitions entering the LaRC Office of Procurement. The main duty of the screener is to ensure that a complete and usable procurement package accompanies the PR. If the package is incomplete or missing supporting documentation, the PR is returned to the end user and PR initiator so that correct or additional data can be sent through the SAP/CMM process. The screener is also a focal point for questions or for reviewing documents before they are submitted

with PRs. As the PR Screener, I have begun outreach efforts by meeting with small groups of PR initiators (normally at the branch level) and answering questions about the procurement process. Feedback is helpful in understanding the customers' frustrations.

In a recent meeting with our largest directorate at the Center, one topic of discussion was sole source justifications. The initiators



explained their frustration when a PR is rejected because the sole source justification was not accepted. After explaining and defining a sole source, many felt that they finally understood what we were looking for in the justification and what truly made a sole source procurement. The PR Screener is also the CO for the simplified acquisition buyers of all requirements less than \$50K. As CO, I reviewed and signed over 500 awards during 2007.

## CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

The largest obstacle in this position is communication with customers. This is why the training we conduct and phone calls and emails we receive are so important. The more explanations and knowledge that we give the customers, the more they understand

our process, and ultimately they are able to give us what we need in order to meet their requirements.

Since this position was created in January 2007 and working with customers commenced, the number of incomplete procurement packages has dropped from 80 percent to 50 percent. It continues to decline. Our lead times continue to improve. The majority of our procurements under \$50K are made within the established lead times. This can be attributed to the fact that our buyers are now receiving complete and usable procurement packages at the beginning of the process. Previously, they would often have to wait for the required documents from the end users even after the PRs had been received in Procurement.

Overall, the position has evolved since January. For example, providing guidance to the Simplified Acquisition Buying team has become a significant part of the job. I also perform duties ranging from something as simple as signing shipping documents to reviewing license agreements. In my opinion (and I don't say this because it is my job), this position is a very valuable part of the team in Procurement as it enables other parts of the office to function more smoothly and meet the expectations and needs of our customers.

## Getting the Job Done:

# The NASA Management Office

## Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the NMO but Were Afraid to Ask...



*Jet Propulsion Laboratory*



*Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory*

### WHERE IS THE NASA MANAGEMENT OFFICE?

The sun seldom sets on us. The NMO is a NASA Headquarters resident organization providing contract management, oversight, and liaison support for Headquarters at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA, and at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL) in Laurel, MD. We maintain direct communication between Headquarters and JPL as well as between Headquarters and JHU/APL.

### WHO WORKS AT THE NMO?

The NMO is staffed by NASA Headquarters civil servants. We are led by our Director, Dr. Eugene Trinh. Dr. Trinh is a former astronaut who conducted physics experiments on the United States Microgravity Laboratory-1 (USML-1) Spacelab mission (STS-50) in 1992.

There are 28 staff members sited at our two locations: three at APL and 25 at JPL. Our staff includes a mix of technical personnel, environmental specialists, property managers, legal staff, and Contracting Officers.

The Contracts Management Section makes up half of the NMO staff with 14 employees currently. We have a Procurement Officer, ten warranted Contracting Officers (including a procurement analyst), a business systems analyst, a program analyst, and a secretary.

### WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES DOES THE NMO PROCUREMENT OFFICE PERFORM?

The contracts' staff works cradle-to-grave contracting actions of the NASA/JPL prime contract, JHU/APL contracts, and operating contracts for the Deep Space Communication Complex facilities including awards, administration, and performance oversight. Our primary customer is the Headquarters Science Directorate. We issue and administer task orders for missions on their behalf, including Mars exploration missions, the Spitzer Space Telescope, New Horizons, Living with a Star, the Cassini Saturn mission, STEREO, and MESSENGER. Other specific work that we manage includes business system oversight such as Accounting – CAS disclosure, rate structure, estimating, compensation, etc.; Audit resolution – DCAA, OIG, GAO; Contractually required NASA Policies – updates; Award Fee/Award Term Management; and Acquisition Oversight – system approval (CPSR), policy/procedure review, consent to subcontract, and advance notice of intent to subcontract.

As you can see, we have a diverse and challenging workload involving the performance of traditional ACO and PCO functions.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JPL AND JHU/APL?

**JPL** is a Federally Funded Research & Development Center (FFRDC) operated by the California Institute of Technology under NASA contract *NAS7-03001*. It is a cost plus award fee, award term type contract, which currently extends to 6/30/2010. JPL is a NASA-owned facility operated by Caltech employees, with nearly 5,000 personnel and a \$1.5B annual budget. JPL has a dual programmatic and institutional character: 1) NASA Center and 2) NASA Contractor. FAR 35.017 outlines the unique relationship between an FFRDC and its Government sponsoring agency.

**JHU/APL** is a University Affiliated Research Center (UARC). Its sponsor is the Navy under a NAVSEA contract. A NASA Management Office presence at the JHU/APL was established in November 2005 to administer all contracts between NASA and the JHU/APL. In May 2006, the NMO at JHU/APL and the NMO at JPL were integrated into one office.

JHU/APL is not an FFRDC as set forth in the FAR. However, NASA has determined that JHU/APL has essential research capabilities that the Agency requires be maintained. Currently, the NMO unit at JHU/APL is responsible for administering three large existing contracts transferred from GSFC in addition to the Aerospace Research, Development, and Engineering Support contract awarded in September 2006.

## WHAT'S THE NMO MISSION?

To optimize the unique global capabilities at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Applied Physics Laboratory, and Deep Space Network to enable scientific discovery and space exploration.

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## Ann Sharpe

*(continued from page 8)*

Headquarters. Now I'm here. I have finally arrived at Headquarters Office of Procurement. Now I'm walking the historic streets of DC, Old Town Alexandria, and so many of the surrounding cities. Now I'm hearing and being part of policies being made, working with people I've admired for many years. When I first accepted the position, I became fearful that I was doing the wrong thing. Had I reached too high this time in my career? Would I be able to meet the requirements expected of me? Would I be happy in a place like Headquarters? However, I did not need to worry. I'm continually amazed at the congeniality of the personnel in the Office of Procurement. I had not expected this. The overall environment is that of friendliness, of people ready and willing to help.

The managers are always ready to listen and always have positive attitudes. Peers are there when you need them. I've found that I have a lot to offer from my diverse procurement background and recent hands-on experience. I'm also involved in many interesting activities, such as working on the Agency's Competitive Sourcing team. I am involved with such areas as soliciting and gathering information from across all NASA for the Fair Act Inventory. I work with others on the team putting the inventory into its final version, providing it to OMB for approval, then submitting the approved data to Congress. I work with the Agency's Work Year Equivalents (WYE) Action team to study and

explain growth of contractor WYEs. I review and process ANOSCAs for various approvals and for award notification to Congress by Public Affairs prior to Center release of award information. I actively participate in Procurement Surveys, which also affords the opportunities to meet and know people across the Agency. I organize and participate in some of the Procurement Strategy Meetings. I am so fortunate to be involved in so many interesting activities.

It took a while, but I've reached my goal. The pinnacle of my career in the place I wanted to live. I can't believe I have been so fortunate. I can't believe that I, Ann Sharpe, am so blessed to be here, in this place, at this very moment.

# The NSSC's Grants Process – Striving to Provide Unparalleled Services

By Cassandra Williams, NASA Shared Services Center

There are BIG things going on in South Mississippi. The NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) has completed its second successful fiscal year end. If you haven't checked out the NSSC via its website at [www.nssc.nasa.gov](http://www.nssc.nasa.gov), you should.

As you know, the NSSC has taken on many roles for NASA. The NSSC Procurement Division has a well-defined process when it comes to awarding grants and cooperative agreements. The NSSC stepped up to the plate and took the challenge of processing grants/cooperative agreements in 29 days or less. But there is a catch. A complete technical requirements package must be submitted before the 29-day clock starts ticking.

The NSSC grant process is simple. The most important things to remember are: (1) determine which procurement vehicle will satisfy your requirement - grant or cooperative agreement; (2) prepare a purchase request and a complete technical requirements package; and (3) submit them to the NSSC for processing. Once it gets to the NSSC, your requirement will be in good hands. The documents necessary for a complete technical requirements package depend upon whether the proposal was solicited or unsolicited. The required documents are listed in a box accompanying this article. A transmittal sheet with a checklist of the documents necessary for a complete technical requirements package can be found at <http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/forms>. Once at that site, choose document NSSC-FORM-0025 and click on the revision date. The form is in MS Word.

After the Center determines whether the proposal will be awarded as a grant or cooperative agreement, it commits the funds by creating, approving, and releasing a PR. While the PR is being processed and approved through SAP/CMM, the technical requirements package should be submitted to the NSSC to begin the award process. The complete technical requirements package may be submitted via fax: 866-779-6772; email: [nssc@nasa.gov](mailto:nssc@nasa.gov); or via regular mail or Federal Express: NASA Shared Services Center, ATTN: Procurement-SP, Building 5100, Stennis Space Center, MS, 39529.

## THE PROCESS

The technical requirements package is immediately scanned into Tech Doc and assigned a change request number in Remedy where it will be tracked throughout the award process. The technical requirements package is then routed to the NSSC's Service Providers' Front End team.

The Front End team matches the technical package with the released PR in CMM. It is very helpful and makes things go faster when the technical requirements package is attached to the PR in SAP and interfaces to CMM. This is the preferred method. The PR number should also be referenced on the transmittal sheet for ease of tracking. The Front End team accepts the PR in CMM and assigns a grant/cooperative agreement number. A notification is then sent to the technical officer and resource analyst that the NSSC is in receipt of the package. The Front End team reviews the package for completeness and for compliance with local policies and procedures. Indirect and fringe benefit rates are also verified and compared to federally-audited rates. If additional information or missing documents are required, the recipient, resource analyst, or technical officer is contacted. If the Front End team experiences difficulty with securing the required documentation within five days, assistance is requested from a Government Grant Officer. If the technical requirements package is complete and acceptable, the status in Remedy is changed to "Work In Progress." This officially starts the 29-day clock to process the grant award. The grant package is then routed to the Service Provider's Grant Writing team.

The Grant Writing team prepares the award in CMM working closely with the Front End team to minimize interruptions to the Grant Officers. After that, the grant file is reviewed by the Service Providers' Peer Review team and is then routed to the Government Grant Officers' team (at the NSSC) for approval.

Grants are awarded on a first-in, first-out basis. After review and approval, the award status is changed in Remedy from "Work In Progress" to "Approved." The award is then routed to the Service Provider's Distribution team for electronic distribution, reporting, and filing.

## SEARCHING

The status of grants and cooperative agreements can be tracked via the NSSC's Grant Status Query System at [www.nssc.nasa.gov/grantstatus](http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/grantstatus). This system incorporates several enhancements intended to provide superior



service and quality information to our customers. You can search by Principal Investigator, Technical Officer, Grant Number, Pgroup/Center, PR Number, Proposal Title, Institution, Status, Complete Package Date, Award Date, Performance Start Date, and Performance End Date. The NSSC follows the same process when awarding supplements for funding actions, no-cost time extensions, and augmentations. However, the process is not as detailed because most of the verifications were completed when the grant or cooperative agreement was awarded. If you have questions or your query needs more detailed information, please call the Contact Center.

The NSSC strives to keep technical personnel informed at all times and is constantly improving its processes. Comments and feedback are requested and appreciated. They may be sent to the Contact Center. The NSSC is a customer-focused organization striving daily to provide “unparalleled services” to both our internal and external customers.

## CONTACTS

Your first call should always be to the Contact Center at: 877-NSSC123 (877-677-2123) or via email: nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov. A Remedy tracking ticket will be created for all calls and emails ensuring a timely response.

If you have questions about your requirement at any time during the process and prefer to speak directly with a Grant Officer, you may call one of the four members of the Grant Officers’ team:

HQ/NMO - Benjamin Benvenuti, 228-813-6128, benjamin.s.benvenuti@nasa.gov

GSFC - Paula Martin, 228-813-6277, paula.r.martin@nasa.gov

GRC/LaRC/ARC/DFRC - LouElla Simonetti, 228-813-6274, louella.simonetti-1@nasa.gov

KSC/MSFC/SSC/JSC - Cassandra Williams, 228-813-6271, cassandra.williams-1@nasa.gov

If you still have issues which cannot be resolved by first calling the Contact Center or second contacting your Center Grant Officer, you may contact:

Tina Landes, Procurement Analyst/Grants Officer, 228-813-6175, Tina.M.Landes@nasa.gov

Monique Sullivan, Chief, Research Activities Branch 228-813-6134, Monique.Sullivan-1@nasa.gov

## REQUIREMENTS

Required documents for “**Solicited**” proposals for new or successor awards include:

- Technical evaluation/peer review evaluation and selection documentation
- Copy of selection letter sent to recipient
- Approved detailed budget along with endorsed proposal (to include appropriate budget narrative/justification)
- Current, signed certifications
- Copy of solicitation cover page
- Other documents as applicable: justification and other approvals (equipment, travel, subcontract consent, general-purpose equipment, human and animal testing); special language and/or requirement for award (unique reporting requirements, training grant provisions, statement of nature of collaboration for cooperative agreements)
- Purchase Requisition

Required documents for “**Unsolicited**” proposals include:

- Justification and Approval for Unsolicited Proposal and technical evaluation
- Approved detailed budget along with endorsed proposal (to include appropriate budget narrative/justification)
- Current, signed certifications
- Other documents as applicable
- Purchase Requisition

Required documents for “**Multi-Year Funding/Continuations**” include:

- Progress report from recipient or a progress statement from the technical officer
- Technical evaluation memorandum or statement from the technical officer
- Revised budget (if different from the original budget when awarded)
- Other documents as applicable
- Purchase Requisition

# A Unique Form of Contract Incentive: Award Term

By Laurie K. DeClaire, Johnson Space Center

Award term is an exciting form of contract incentive with great possibilities. Although procedurally similar to the award fee incentive found in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 16.405-2, award term is a non-monetary incentive, which rewards the contractor with additional periods of performance without a new competition. Award term is a unique approach to maintaining the highest levels of performance by rewarding contractors with opportunities for increased future business. A contractor's length of contract term is directly related to how well it performs under the contract. For JSC, that level of performance is associated with a determination of "excellent" by the Award Determination Official.

The award term incentive should be structured in such a way that it motivates contractors to achieve excellent performance. JSC recommends using the standardized award fee guidelines in its approach to award term. Unlike the award fee evaluation which is typically a six-month performance period, award term will be composed of two bi-annual evaluation periods. These will be averaged to obtain a final technical score.

At JSC, cost performance is one of the key components in the evaluation of a contractor under award term. Utilizing the incentive requires a contractor to meet a cost gate. A cost gate is defined as a target cost that a contractor must meet before an additional term may be awarded. The cost gate and the final technical score will be used as the basis for the award term decision.

To continue to motivate the contractor, JSC's recommendation is to use the award fee incentive during periods not subject to an award term evaluation. It is important to realize that award term can be utilized with different contract types for different products and services. The maximum period of performance a contractor may earn is 10 years. However, any potential term greater than five years requires an NFS deviation. Should the contractor fail to earn term in two successive periods, all remaining award term is forfeited and the process of re-procurement begins.

The JSC Award Term Implementation team has spent the last year researching and gathering data on this new form of incentive. In order to bring the JSC procurement organization the best products

possible, the implementation team has conducted an extensive amount of benchmarking. This information has been assembled into a collection of best practices and lessons learned by other NASA Centers and the Department of Defense. The templates developed by the team incorporate findings from the other Centers and Government agencies.

The Award Term Implementation team is pleased to announce that it is in the process of rolling out guidance on the use of this new contract incentive to JSC procurement personnel. Here at JSC, we are anticipating that two training classes will be provided to the procurement organization next August. JSC Procurement will be notified of the dates for scheduled classes via email. Perhaps other Centers will be interested in learning about our classes and instituting some of their own.

The members of the JSC Award Term Implementation team are Laurie DeClaire, Lara Procknow, Billy Autry, Roberta Beckman, Stephanie Hunter, John Trahan, Jessica Miller, Delene Sedillo, Susan Sinclair, and Liz Fountain.

## Procurement Conference Charts

The charts for the Fall 2007 Procurement Training Conference in Orlando are now online. You can find them at: <http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/conf2007/index.html>.

# People on the Move

*(continued from page 5)*

## **NMO (CONTINUED)**

**New Faces:** Steven Parker is the new Procurement Officer. He came from the Kennedy Space Center. Carrie Parish joins the NMO at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL) in MD. Carrie comes to us from the Department of Veterans Affairs in Los Angeles. She lived near one part of the NMO and moved across the country to work at the other.

## **NSSC**

**New Faces:** As a song from the 70s goes, “Welcome Back....” not to Mr. Kotter but to Louann Beu. Louann was previously at the NSSC on a two-month TDY to assist the Grants team to prepare for “Go Live” with the Wave I Centers. Louann is back this time on a permanent basis as the Contracting Officer for the Agency-wide contracts team. Prior to joining us, Louann was the Center liaison at Dryden and lived in a gated mountain community. She says she will not miss the bit of snow that the area normally receives. She and her husband, Richard, are looking for a home to buy in the area. Another newcomer to our division is Mark Chadwick. Let’s give Mark a grand Southern welcome. Mark transferred from the US Courts in Washington, DC. He is the new Contracting Officer for the Service Provider Contract. Mark’s vast knowledge and background with the Navy has enabled him to easily “hit the ground running.” Mark says he’s looking forward to golfing at the courses in Diamondhead as well as getting settled into his new home with his two German Shepherd dawgs (that’s Southern for dogs). So WELCOME to Mississippi and the NSSC, Louann and Mark!!!

## **SSC**

**Congratulations:** The following individuals were promoted: Rob Harris, Joseph Ladner, and James “Jake” Jacobs. Rob Harris also received the Space Flight Awareness Launch Honoree Award.

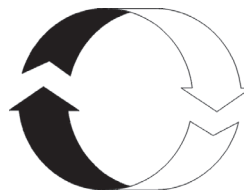
**Farewell:** Penny Parker, team lead, Center Management Support Division, retired in August. Betty Jo Spiering, contract specialist, transferred to FEMA contracting at the Gulf Coast Recovery Center in Biloxi, MS. Warren Wood, cost price analyst, transferred to the Office of the Inspector General at Housing and Urban Development in New Orleans.

**New Faces:** Randal Barnett joined us and is with DCMA. Leana Marshall joined us and is our co-op attending Pearl River Community College. She will attend the University of Southern Mississippi in the future. Becky McKenzie comes to NASA from Mississippi State University. She worked as a co-op at Marshall Space Flight Center (alternating semesters) during school. Charles Heim comes to us from the NASA Shared Services Center. Sonja Rushing has recently joined us from the contracting office at Keesler Air Force Base.

**Changes:** The following people’s titles have changed: Rose Baker assumed cost/price analyst duties. Beth Bradley was named Center Management Support Division team lead. Jason Edge was named Lead Construction Specialist.

**Other:** Approval was received from NASA Headquarters and the Center Director announced that the Acquisition Management Office (AMO) and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer will become separate offices (instead of being a combined Business Management Directorate). The Procurement Officer and the CFO will report directly to the Center Director. The AMO will now be called the Office of Procurement.

# Continuous Learning



By Mary Petkoff, NASA Headquarters

All NASA contracting personnel are required to meet new continuous learning requirements. Valuable benefits of continuous learning are acquiring new contracting knowledge, including information about revised acquisition policies and procedures; cross training to learn about other related areas, such as program/project management; and developing management and leadership skills.

Contracting personnel are required to accumulate 80 Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) every two years. The first reporting period is October 1, 2007, to September 30, 2009. As we phase in the new requirements at NASA, continuous learning completed between July 1, 2006, and September 30, 2007, can also be counted toward the first reporting period. For the second reporting period, all CLPs must be earned during the actual time period of October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2011.

## EARNING CLPS

The four methods of earning CLPs are training, professional activities, education, and experience. A description of each continuous learning method, the creditable activities, and the recommended amount of CLPs assigned for each activity are found at: <http://www.fai.gov/career/certprog.asp>. All continuous

learning activities must be job-related. Generally, CLPs are earned in smaller increments i.e. less than 20 CLPs per continuous learning session.

Completion of acquisition related on-line training or on-line continuous learning modules offered by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) or the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) allow individuals to earn CLPs. Procurement professionals can access on-line training or on-line continuous learning modules at <https://www.atrs.army.mil/channels/faitas/courses/crssearch.aspx>.

Ways to satisfy continuous learning requirements include participating on Procurement Management Survey Teams, attending Procurement Training Conferences, completing annual ethics training, serving on a rotational assignment, completing Agency or Center information technology or security training, serving as a mentor, or attending internal training sessions, such as brown bag lunches, focused training sessions, and targeted learning workshops.

## HOW TO TRACK

Individuals are responsible for their own career development including continuous learning. Contracting personnel are required to record and track their continuous learning, regardless of which

method or methods are used to earn CLPs. Approved SATERN internal or external training requests are required before registration in on-line, on-site, or off-site training. In addition, CLPs will also need to be recorded in the Acquisition Career Information Management System (ACMIS), maintained by FAI, once the software is fully updated.

Contracting supervisors should help identify opportunities for continuous learning, discuss continuous learning during meetings concerning performance plans and performance appraisals, encourage individuals to include continuous learning on individual development plans, and approve participation in continuous learning activities. Eventually, supervisors will also be required to validate continuous learning activities in ACMIS.

Center procurement training coordinators track CLPs earned by contracting personnel. Six months before the end of the first reporting period, the training coordinators must notify any individuals and their supervisors who have not earned the required CLPs.

NASA contracting personnel have ample opportunity to meet the new continuous learning requirements. Based on the ever-changing acquisition environment, you must acquire new knowledge throughout your entire career.

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## Procurement Countdown

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