

## SPE Corner



There are many new and exciting changes in the works for us this New Year. As many of you are already aware, the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA) authorizes a new fund to provide broad training opportunities to the Federal acquisition workforce. The goal of the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund is to ensure that the Federal acquisition workforce adapts to changes in the nature of Federal government acquisition and develops new skills

and competencies to foster future success. Activities under this Fund are intended to supplement, not replace, other training that an agency provides.

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) will manage the Fund. The Fund will provide FAI with the stabilized funding needed to develop training resources that will transition Federal acquisition professionals to the new service oriented and technology-driven Federal market. It will finance training programs for acquisition officials within civilian executive agencies and does not apply to the Department of Defense (DoD).



for agencies other than the sponsoring agency are accomplished through the Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535).

### 2. Governmentwide

contracts for the acquisition of information technology (IT) under Section 11101 of Title 40 under and multi-agency contracts Section 11314 of Title 40.

by David Drabkin

The Fund will be financed through quarterly deposits of 5 percent of the fees collected by non-defense executive agencies under their interagency contracts. Agencies sponsoring interagency contracts will need to separately account for fees from civilian agencies and from DoD activities. Covered contracts include:

1. *Governmentwide* contracts entered into under sections 303H and 303I of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 U.S.C. 253h and 253i). These are task and delivery order contracts for services or property, including advisory and assistance services. Orders

This includes contracts awarded by an agency designated as an executive agent by the Office of Management and Budget. Agencies may order from these

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- We introduce "FAR-cited"
- FPDS reports now available
- Obtain Wage Determinations Online
- Submit your Nominations for the Ida Ustad Award Now



contracts without invoking the Economy Act. It also includes multiagency contracts for IT awarded by other agencies. Orders under these contracts are subject to the Economy Act.

3. Multiple-award schedule contracts entered into by the General Services Administration (GSA). GSA's Federal Supply Service (FSS) manages this program, with agreements with more than 8,000 commercial firms for over 4 million products and services.

FSS is working with GSA to develop a collection method that

will avoid the need to modify price lists for the 4 million items on schedule contracts. FAI will coordinate with the agencies that sponsor GWACs and other covered contracts on issues related to tracking fees and making deposits.

To develop training that best serves the acquisition community, FAI will seek guidance from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, the FAI Board of Directors, and the Federal Acquisition Council. FAI welcomes ideas and suggestions from across the acquisition commu-

nity, including the Interagency Procurement Career Management Committee.

Training is an important function of workforce development and succession planning. Many changes have occurred in the way we do business over the past decade and many more are yet to come. Keeping abreast of these changes and acquiring new competencies and skills as they are needed is the way in which we assure that no associate is left behind and all have an equal opportunity for advancement. The Training Fund will



help provide timely materials for our acquisition workforce, but it is still up to management to make sure that each associate has an IDP and that acquisition workforce associates schedule and attend training to reinforce existing competencies and skills and to acquire new ones necessary to ensure that GSA provides best value to our custom-

ers.

I will highlight other provisions of SARA in future editions of this newsletter.

## From the Desk of the Editor

by Judy Steele

The beginning of a new year is always an exciting time and in this month's "Forum" we report on many new initiatives as well as developments in existing programs. As promised, we introduce our column "FAR-Cited," which will answer questions on the application of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). In the future we hope to add another column,

"Gee, SAM" which will respond to questions on the use of the GSA Acquisition Manual (GSAM). Speaking of the GSAM, the Office of Acquisition Policy is striving to improve the GSAM and to do so is requesting your input.

We are also requesting your input on how we can make the OGP Website more useful. See



those two articles for who to contact.

Enclosed is also an article on developments to the Federal Procurement Data System--Next Generation (FPDS-NG) which now has reporting capabilities. The Integrated Acquisition Environment Initiative (IAE) continues to expand with the development of online



capabilities for obtaining wage determinations. PBS reports back from the Property Management & Procurement Joint Business Conference. In future editions of the "Forum," to ensure that all of GSA's acquisition workforce is represented in the newsletter, we hope to report on the latest acquisition news from FSS and FTS.

Last month's "Spotlight on Excellence!" highlighted the accomplishments of last year's Ida M. Ustad Award winner. It is time again to take nominations for the Ida M. Ustad Award, which will be presented at the

Federal Acquisition Conference and Expo (FACE) awards dinner. The Elmer Staats Award for Young Acquisition Professional Excellence and two Performance-Based Service Acquisition awards will also be presented at this dinner. JWOD is also accepting nominations for the E.R. "Dick" Alley Career Achievement Award. Please see the enclosed articles for more information on these awards. And please encourage your offices to submit names of outstanding acquisition professionals who we can feature each month in "Spotlight on Excellence." These are all won-

derful opportunities to provide recognition to hardworking GSA associates!

We welcome any comments, suggestions and articles on the newsletter. **The "Forum" is here to meet the needs of the GSA acquisition community and we can't do that without your input!** We also welcome any individually authored articles on acquisition issues that would be of interest to the GSA acquisition audience. Please contact the Editor, Judy Steele, at [judy.steele@gsa.gov](mailto:judy.steele@gsa.gov) or (202) 501-4994 with comments or suggestions.

## "Far-Cited"

**QUESTION:** Since the re-write of FAR Part 15, there has been no formal guidance as to whether or not it is permissible to disclose the names and number of offers received in a negotiated procurement. Contracting officers appear to be deciding this issue for



themselves. Some contracting officers (and contractors) feel that disclosure of the names of offerors facilitates partnering between prime contractors and subcontractors, particularly on construction projects. Other contracting officers feel

that disclosure of the names and number of offers received compromises the Government's negotiating position. Can you please give some direction on this?

**RESPONSE:** The FAR does provide an answer to this question. Contracting officers may not disclose the names or num-

ber of offers received. This prohibition is found at FAR 15.505 (f), which states: "Preaward debriefings shall not disclose- (1) The number of offerors; (2) The identity of other offerors; (3) The content of other offerors' proposals; (4) The ranking of other offerors; (5) The evaluation of other offerors; or (6) Any of the information prohibited in 15.506 (e)."

If you have any questions about where the FAR covers a specific topic, please send them to the Editor to be answered in the next edition of the newsletter. Additionally, we would like to develop a column on the GSAM, which will provide answers for questions related to the GSAM. Please forward any questions on the GSAM to the Editor as well.



## Focusing on GSAM!

The GSA Acquisition Manual (GSAM) provides an enormous amount of contracting guidance, instructional material, and lessons learned for effectively navigating the Federal acquisition process to meet the needs of GSA and its customer agencies. The GSAM is the official source document for GSA policy regarding the agency's acquisition system. Since first issued in September 1999, the GSAM has been revised six times to incorporate GSA acquisition policy and guidance. The revisions have provided for, among other things, training requirements for all GSA employees involved in

the acquisition process; implementing Section 211 of the e-Government Act of 2002; GSA's Affirmative Procurement Program and its effects on acquisition planning, requirement development, and use of recovered materials; GSA's Federal Supply Service unilateral right to change the percentage rate of the Industrial Funding Fee in the Multiple Award Schedule contracts; cooperative purchasing; FSS vendor identification of products with environmental attributes; and other changes necessary to implement and supplement the FAR.

Although we have been updating and maintaining the GSAM as changes to laws and higher-level regulations are made, more needs to be done. We need to make the GSAM more applicable to the commercial marketplace while maintaining its integrity and maintain it at a level where all agency acquisition personnel can rely upon it with complete confidence.

Meeting these goals requires a team effort. Ernest Woodson, Procurement Analyst, MVP, has been assigned primary responsibility for updating and maintaining the GSAM, but he needs



your help. Through our combined efforts, with your help, we hope to ensure that the GSAM sufficiently and effectively provides the guidance, policies, and instructions necessary to keep GSA in the

*"We need (your help) to make the GSAM more applicable to the commercial marketplace."*

forefront of Federal acquisition. We encourage all GSA acquisition personnel who have questions, concerns, or suggestions for improving the GSAM to contact Ernest Woodson at (202) 501-3775, or e-mail him with your com-

ments or suggestions at [ernest.woodson@gsa.gov](mailto:ernest.woodson@gsa.gov).

## Enhancing MVP's Website to Better Meet Your Needs

What's missing from the Acquisition Policy Division (MVP) website? Where is it deficient? What should be added to it? How can it be improved to better serve you? These are some of the questions being asked as we take on the challenge of making MVP's website more informative and user friendly.

A step in that direction has al-

ready been taken – Ernest Woodson, Procurement Analyst, MVP, has been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the website's enhancement. Some of the ideas for improving the website include: listing the names of the FAR Staff and their assignments; placing a Federal acquisition calendar of events on the site; and developing a "hot" topics page that includes current legislation and actions affecting

the Federal acquisition system and workforce.

However, any movement towards improving the website without first collecting and considering the recommendations and suggestions of GSA's acquisition workforce and other primary users would undoubtedly be a disservice to those whom the site is intended to serve.

Comments and suggestions for improving the website, which were encouraged in our November 12, 2003 message to MVP's acquisition points-of-contact, have been slow to arrive. But, it's not too late! To really enhance MVP's website to meet your needs, we need to know your concerns and thoughts for making it better. Without your input, our best efforts may indeed prove to be fruitless.

*"It's not too late to provide comments to help improve the MVP website."*

If you have not already done so, please take a good look at MVP's website. Go to "Insite," click on "Organization," then click on "Office of Governmentwide Policy," then click on "Acquisition Policy." Let us know what you think. Send your comments and suggestions to [ernest.woodson@gsa.gov](mailto:ernest.woodson@gsa.gov), or call him at (202) 501-3775.

## Federal Procurement Data System-NEXT GENERATION (FPDS-NG) Now Available

by Jerry Olson

FPDS-NG now has the first batch of reports on procurement data from the FPDS-NG database available for government users **free of charge**. These reports are available to any login users of FPDS-NG merely by choosing the desired reports as "My Reports" on the FPDS webpage. The reports will include useful information to those re-

sponsible for ensuring proper and current reporting to FPDS-NG as well as information on procurement activity for people who need to know about the performance of the procurement system.

While these reports will be available in real time and show FY 2004 results immediately (if they

have been submitted properly to FPDS-NG), they will also include data from the old FPDS database on prior year procurement actions. The information in the reports is only as good as the data reported to FPDS-NG, so it is important that everyone report contract actions promptly.

To get reports do the following:

1. Go to <https://fpds.gov>.
2. Login with the user ID and the password provided by your System Administrator.
3. Select the "My Reports" button.
4. Click "Add Reports".
5. Select the available reports by selecting the associated check boxes.
5. Click the "Add to My Reports" button.
6. To produce a report, go to My

Reports" and select the one you want to use. Fill in the search criteria for your report.

9. If you want to print out the report after it appears on your screen, select "Download to PDF" (or CSV, if you want it in an Excel spreadsheet).

*"...it is important that everyone report contract actions promptly."*

The list of reports to be available will grow each month. Also, most reports will soon be more flexible so that you can get a report to show data at the GSA wide level or down to the purchasing office level. Some reports do that now. Many of the planned re-

ports are:

- Individual Contract Award High Dollar Report
- Contract Life Cycle Report by Number Report
- Research and Development Summary Report
- Supplies and Equipment Report
- Other Services and Construction Report
- Federal Procurement Report by Department Report
- Total Federal Snapshot Report
- Federal Contract Actions and Dollars Report
- Small Business Awards Report
- NAICS Summary Report
- Federal Procurement by State Summary Report
- Federal Procurement Dollars by State Report
- Awards to 8(a) Contractors Report
- Awards to HUBZone Small Business Report
- Contractor Search Report
- Product or Service Search Report
- Ad hoc report on elements of your choosing
- List of Users Never Logged In Report
- Last Login Date For Users Report
- Individual Contract Award Accepted-Key Details (List of Valid Documents) Report
- List of Users For Agency Report
- Weekly Administrator Status Report
- Performance Statistics for Agency Report
- Performance Statistics for Contracting Offices Report
- Performance Statistics for All Departments Report

Plans are underway to develop customized reports that will be available on request. You will work with the FPDS-NG Help Desk to generate those for your use. As more and more types of reports are developed, FPDS-NG users will be notified so that the full functionality of FPDS-NG can be used as soon as possible. For more information, con-

tact Jerry Olson, the FPDS Program Manager at [jerry.olson@gsa.gov](mailto:jerry.olson@gsa.gov) or (202) 501-3221

## IAE Corner—Update on Wage Determinations Online

By Lisa Cliff

An interagency task force initiative was launched in November 2003. The initiative, known as the Wage Determinations Online ([www.wdol.gov](http://www.wdol.gov)), is part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), and is one of the e-Government initiatives on the President's Management Agenda. The new governmentwide public website makes service and construc-

tion wage determinations and contractor labor standards information issued by the Department of Labor (DOL) available and easily accessible by the GSA contracting community, other Federal agencies and the general public.

The website is especially important to the GSA contracting community since it provides a single web-based location for GSA

contracting officers to obtain appropriate Service Contract Act (SCA) and Davis-Bacon Act (DBA) wage determinations (WDs) for each official contract action. The DBA requires that contractors on federally funded construction projects pay their construction workers no less than the locally prevailing wage. The SCA requires contractors performing services on most Federal contracts to pay service



employees no less than the wage rates and fringe benefits found prevailing in the locality. The wage determinations are incorporated by the contracting agencies into covered contracts.

*"Get your wage determination quickly at [www.wdol.gov](http://www.wdol.gov)"*

In the past, a request for wage determinations could take from 60 days to 6 months and the request could only be initiated by regular mail. During that time service contracting accounted for 53% of executive agency procurement expenditures and there were in excess

of 60,000 requests for wage determinations annually governmentwide. It is anticipated that [www.wdol.gov](http://www.wdol.gov) will dramatically reduce the length of time it takes the GSA contracting community to receive wage determination information.

For more information, contact Lisa Cliff, IAE Communications Department at [lisa.cliff@gsa.gov](mailto:lisa.cliff@gsa.gov). You may also visit e-Gov

at <http://egov.gsa.gov>.

## Public Building Service (PBS) Acquisition News: Report from the Property Management and Procurement Joint Business Conference

The Office of Property Management (PXR) and the Office of Procurement (PXP) held a joint 3 day business conference in Washington DC, December 9-11, 2003. The items addressed included the following.

### Property Management

- Computerized Maintenance Management System Procurement –

Group was provided updates on the CMMS National Procurement and asked to accumulate information still needed to finish the package.

- Results of the Interdivisional Working Group to

formulate and Execute Integrated Solutions to Reduce Operations and Maintenance Costs of New Federal Buildings and Major Renovations – The Group was briefed regarding the status of this report and the many efforts cur-



rently underway following the report's action recommendations.

- History and Future of the GSA Preventative Maintenance Guides and Time Standards. – The group was briefed regarding the history of the guides and the current status of recognition within GSA. The group

decided not to take any specific action.

- Provided an update on the GSA/JWOD strategic alliance to include an overview of the alliance, reminders, and budget changes for the JWOD program.
- CodeADAM Briefing. All Regional Property Management Officers

were briefed on the program and asked to contact the FPS Deputy Directors in their regions to set up a strategy to canvass and brief on all buildings in our inventory and to have procedures in place as pursuant to Public Law 108-21. The team of RPMO and FPS Officials will



brief the Building Security Committees who will then pass along the information to the building tenants. When no BSC exists, they will brief the Delegated Officials.

Other means of communications will occur simultaneously, such as FEB briefings and building tenant meetings.

- Federal Agencies' Public Access Defibrillation Program (PAD) - Updated and clarified issues concerning the Federal Agencies' Public Access Defibrillation

Programs (PAD) in Federal Facilities. Briefed the participants on Property Management's growing concerns of ending up with the administrative responsibilities for the Agencies PAD Programs.

- State of the Regions Briefings – Each region addressed fellow regions for 20 minutes, outlining their programs, issues, successes, and concerns.

## Procurement

- Performance Based Service Contracting (PBSC) Inspector General (IG) Audit - Four teams consisting of acquisition and property management associates reviewed a recent PBSC IG audit and assessed what needed to be done to support the IG's findings and recommendations and to ensure future regional compliance. Analysis of the PBSC audit was conducted and nationally applicable strategies were developed for identifying and



implementing regional practices including improved management oversight tools and techniques.

- Green Cleaning - The PBS Procurement Division, Environmental Division, regional associ-

ates, and members of other Federal agencies and Industry presented a paneled discussion on Green Cleaning lessons learned.

- Competitive Sourcing - A presentation and question and answer

session was provided on the status and impacts of competitive sourcing in PBS.

- Reorganization - Presentations were made by Paul Lynch and Bill Jenkins on the reorganization and the acquisition



community.

- RCRA Data Call - A presentation was made on the partnering effort required to improve RCRA Data Call results. The regions were informed that the next RCRA Data Call report is due to headquarters on February 10, 2004.
- Comprizon.Buy - The

PBS CIO's office gave a presentation on the web-based generation of the acquisition tracking software.

- Obligation of Minimums in IDIQ - Legal Counsel held a discussion session covering the topics of Obligation of Guaranteed Minimums on Indefinite Quantity Indefi-

nite Delivery Contracts and Protests and Disputes.

- CCR Updates - The Procurement Division provided updates on CCR Compliance and standardizing procedures on notifying contractors and FedTeds training; FPDS-NG Reporting; ACMIS; Security Clear-



ances; and Future Conference Agenda Items.

- Variety of General Topics - Acquisition Policy discussed a variety of topics including: Contracting Officer Warrant Acquisition Letter and training; the Acquisition Planning Order, the Future of Procurement; Improved Communications; Major Changes in

Procurement

### Property Management

- On December 12, Karone Blondin, NISH, and the Committee for Purchase held their monthly Strategic Alliance meeting. Monthly meetings are held to ensure the partnership continues to move forward and to discuss issues that affect the strategic alliance. Specifically,

during this meeting the team discussed updating the standard operating procedure, regional meeting, tracking projects, and pricing tools for determining cost/sq. ft.

If you have any questions on the information above, please contact Barbara Bartee at Barbara.bartee@gsa.gov or (202) 501-1824.

## FACE Awards Opportunities

The Federal Acquisition Conference and Expo (FACE), to be held June 2-3, 2004 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, in Arlington, Virginia will feature several awards for outstanding acquisition professionals presented at a dinner on June 2.

The awards include the Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition which honors the late Deputy Associate Administrator for Acquisition Policy in the Office of Governmentwide Policy (see details on that award in the article below). The Procurement Round Table will present the Elmer Staats Award for Young Acquisition Professional Excellence, a \$5,000 award given to a young Federal acquisition professional who makes significant contributions to acquisition operations or policy. To be eligible for the award, candidates must have made a noteworthy contribution to acquisition operations or policy within 18

months of the due date for nominations; have at least five years of civil or military service as a contracting officer, contract specialist, procurement analyst, or purchasing agent; and be no more than 37 years of age as of the due date for nominations. For more information on the Elmer Staats award, please contact Paul Denett at (703) 558-3055 or [pdennett@esi-intl.com](mailto:pdennett@esi-intl.com).

Two awards concerning performance-based services will also be presented at the FACE dinner. The Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition Award is a \$1,000 award for GSA acquisition professionals recognizing individuals on the performance-based acquisition team. To be eligible, the nominee must be a GSA associate who has played a leadership role driving a performance based acquisition. The nominee may be anyone on the "Acquisition Team,"

as defined by FAR 1.102, excluding non-government employees; i.e., any participant in Government acquisition including representatives of the technical, supply and procurement communities and the customers they serve. The nominee's accomplishment must have taken place during FY 2002 and/or FY 2003. Nominations must come from someone within the nominee's chain of command. The award information will be on [www.acqnet.gov](http://www.acqnet.gov) soon.

A governmentwide "Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition—Awarding Outstanding Achievement in Government Contracting Award" sponsored by the Performance Institute will also be presented at this dinner. For more information on this award, check the website [www.acquisitionexcellence.org](http://www.acquisitionexcellence.org).



## Submit Your Nominations for Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition

OGP is accepting nominations for the Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition. The award will be presented at a dinner during the Federal Acquisition Conference and Expo, June 2-3, 2004. This award honors the late Ida Ustad, Deputy Associate Administrator for Acquisition Policy, OGP. She earned a well-deserved reputation for her acquisition expertise and dedication to public service. This

award is intended to honor individuals that carry on her tradition of excellence in acquisition. This is an opportunity to recognize the innovation and inspiration that members of GSA's acquisition workforce bring to our customers. Nominations for the 2004 Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition will be accepted January 12 - February 27. For information on nominating an individual and the nomi-

nation form, please go to <http://www.acqnet.gov/ida/index.html>. For more information on the Ida Ustad Award Program, contact Beverly Cromer at [Beverly.cromer@gsa.gov](mailto:Beverly.cromer@gsa.gov) or (202) 501-1448.

## Do You Know a JWOD Program Supporter?

By Annmarie Hart-Bookbinder

If so, then be sure to submit a nomination for the 2004 E.R. "Dick" Alley Career Achievement Award.

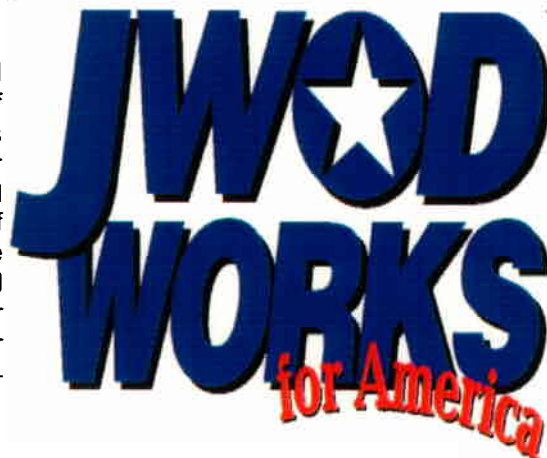
The Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is soliciting nominations for the E.R. "Dick" Alley Career Achievement Award. The Alley Award was established in 1998 in honor and recognition of Dick Alley who provided more than 25 years of dedicated service to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program as the Deputy Executive Director of the Committee staff. This is the highest award given by the Committee and is intended to recognize current Federal employees who have provided **extraordinary, sustained** support for the JWOD Program and its mission of creating employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. All individuals employed by the Federal government are eligible to be nominated. The award will be presented at both the NISH and National Industries for the Blind Annual Conferences in

2004.

The most recent GSA employee to receive this honor was Stephen Arginteanu of the Public Building Service in New York, who was the 2000 recipient. Over his thirty-year career with GSA, his support of the JWOD

Program in the award and administration of contracts, as well as efforts to educate other contracting personnel about the benefits of contracting with the Program, has helped create over 400 jobs for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Nominations, preferably submitted in electronic form, must be received by **February 27, 2004**. Nomination instructions and forms can be obtained from the Committee's website at [www.acqnet.gov/jwod](http://www.acqnet.gov/jwod) or by contacting Stephanie Lesko of the Committee staff at [slesko@jwod.gov](mailto:slesko@jwod.gov) or (703) 603-0036.



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*We thank our guest authors for their contribution to this newsletter. Guest authors express their own views, which are provided for the information of our newsletter readers.*

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We welcome any comments, suggestions, and articles. We also welcome any individually authored articles on acquisition issues that would be of interest to the GSA acquisition audience. Please contact the Editor, Judy Steele, at [judy.steele@gsa.gov](mailto:judy.steele@gsa.gov) or (202) 501-4994 with comments or suggestions. Questions for the "FAR-cited" and "GEE,SAM" columns can also be submitted to the Editor.