



GSA Acquisition Workforce Forum

--Informing the GSA acquisition workforce on the latest acquisition news and events!

CAO Corner by Emily Murphy

EDITION ELEVEN
SPRING 2006



It is my pleasure as the first full time CAO to share my resolutions for the year with you so you will know what we are focusing on in 2006 and how we hope you will be involved. My resolutions align with the three broad themes that I have been working on since I came to GSA—**Capacity, Compliance, and Competition**. Originally, there was a fourth “C,” for Caffeine, because it was my goal to cut back the amount I consume, but that resolution has already fallen by the wayside. The remaining 3 “Cs” support GSA’s Get It Right Campaign for Federal Acquisition Excellence, and are intended to help us further deliver on that promise of excellent acquisitions.

My first resolution is to ensure that you, our acquisition workforce, have the **Capacity**—the tools, training, support and recognition that you need in order to help our agency customers fulfill their missions. This includes:

- helping the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) complete a reorganization that will provide a clear source of policy and guidance for the 1102 community;

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“Public service is one of dedication, selflessness, great reward and sacrifice. Many Americans do not realize that the families of those who serve the public exhibit the same attributes and make the same sacrifices as those who have chosen to serve.”

--Scott Armey

- leveraging the Federal Acquisition Institute/Defense Acquisition University (FAI/DAU) partnership and the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund to make 88 core training courses available, free of charge, by the end of the fiscal year;
- ensuring that the good work done by the Center for Acquisition Excellence is made available on the broadest possible platform and that the courses developed address any skill gaps;
- assessing the career path in place for our acquisition workforce so that meaningful opportunities are available to advance from entry level to senior positions; and,
- developing an award that recognizes exceptional acquisitions – those that go “above and beyond” in meeting our customer’s needs while “getting it right.”

I’m always impressed by the amount of responsibility shouldered by the acquisition workforce; we give you the ability to obligate the federal government. So it is my job as CAO, and that of my office, to make sure you have our full support.


My second resolution is to continue ensuring that GSA’s procurements reflect **Compliance** to applicable laws and regulations. It’s my job to help you do this. As I’ve visited with many of you in the regions, you have told me that portions of the GSAM are simply not useful because they are out of date, don’t incorporate our acquisition letters, or simply don’t address issues you feel are important to your daily work. To improve the GSAM, OCAO published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register on February 15, soliciting ideas for changes and improvements. I’ve also asked the

Regional Administrators to nominate individuals to work with us on specific portions of the GSAM so that your thoughts are incorporated into any revisions. This is a major task and will be a multi-year effort, but it’s my hope that clearer guidance will assist us all as we strive for acquisition excellence.

As we do our utmost to ensure compliance, I’ve asked the Procurement Management Review teams to identify successful acquisitions that represent the creativity and commitment to our customers that we celebrate at GSA so that we can recognize those procurements. We are also going to ask **you** to nominate procurements you believe are worthy of special recognition. Currently, OCAO envisions recognizing these procurements on a quarterly basis, and we are working on developing the criteria by which we’ll judge the nominations. Compliance is about recognizing where we can improve, but it’s also about honoring success and learning from each other.

My third resolution is to encourage **Competition** in contracting that gets the best value for the taxpayer. Competition is also a great way to encourage small business participation and innovation. GSA has so much to be proud of in this area. One third of the dollars spent through the schedules program go to small businesses, compared with 23% governmentwide; approximately 80% of schedule contracts are held by small business; and GSA consistently demonstrates its commitment to small business.

GSA should also be very proud of its e-Buy tool, because it’s a great way of gaining additional competition while complying with the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) Section 803 requirements, and it provides further transparency into the acquisition process. As we look at our rules and regulations, we need to continue to encourage the participation of all businesses. In 2006 we are expanding the



application of Section 803 and e-Buy in order to drive additional competition. This will bring down prices, encourage innovation, and give us better baseline data for future acquisitions. All of this will help us deliver on our value proposition, and make it easier for customers to use GSA schedules.

With these three resolutions in the areas of Capacity, Competition, and Compliance, I believe 2006 will provide us at GSA an opportunity to continue providing best value for our customer agencies and the taxpayer. I am looking forward to a great 2006 with you all!

From the Desk of the Editor

by Judy Steele



A critical standard for the civilian acquisition workforce has been established with the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program (FAC-C). Requirements for education, training, and experience for those seeking federal certification in the non-DoD acquisition function are now established. Requirements for continuous training listed in FAC-C can be met by acquisition professionals by taking classes at the 2006 NCMA World Congress and the GSA Expo. You can also receive training through the GSA GWAC Centers. This edition of the “Forum” also focuses on opportunities for the GSA acquisition workforce to participate in major review programs by providing input to the SARA panel, helping the GSA PMR teams, and commenting on needed GSAM changes. Be sure to check out IAE Corner in the newsletter and read about the recent seminar on procurement in Arab countries just held in Naples, Italy, and the article on the development of FedTeDS in the post-9/11 world. And check out the updates in our other regular columns: Hurricane Relief, Getting It Right, Small Business Corner, Green Procurement, Section 508 and JWOD.

We welcome any comments, suggestions and articles for 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 with comments or suggestions.



HURRICANE RELIEF

Realty Specialists Honored

GSA Realty Specialists Lill Clark and David Waishes of the Greater Southwest Region and John Fitzgibbon of the Great Lakes Region were honored by the Reverend Vien The Nguyen, pastor of Mary, Queen of Vietnam (Catholic) Parish in New Orleans, for their help in bringing temporary housing to the parish neighborhood. All three associates helped in leasing travel trailer sites for temporary housing for residents left homeless by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The recognition was part of the community’s recent celebration of the Tet lunar New Year. For more information, contact Bruce Hall at bruce.hall@gsa.gov or 312-353-2605.



PBS ARA Jim Weller (left) and RA Scott Armey (right) honor Juan Griego for relief efforts



SARA Panel Adopts First Recommendations

In the last issue of the newsletter you were introduced to the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Acquisition Advisory Panel, sometimes referred to as the SARA Section 1423 Panel. We are now able to report on the adoption of some of these recommendations by the Panel during its last two public meetings. These recommendations will benefit small businesses and address accountability and transparency in interagency contracting. These recommendations are just that—recommendations which will be considered by Congress and/or the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP).


Associates Honored for Relief Efforts

Greater Southwest Regional Administrator Scott Armey honored more than 130 associates who were deployed in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita at a ceremony February 27 in Fort Worth, Texas. Associates were invited to bring their families so that Armey could personally thank them for the sacrifices made while their loved ones were deployed for extensive periods of time to Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Austin. “Public service is one of dedication, selflessness, great reward and sacrifice. Many Americans do not realize that the families of those who serve the public exhibit the same attributes and make the same sacrifices as those who have chosen to serve,” Armey said. Honorees were presented with a memento of their service and were asked to introduce their families. More than 60 additional field associates and their families will also be honored at field office award ceremonies over the next several weeks. For more information, contact Tye DeBerry at tye.deberry@gsa.gov or 817-978-0052.

Small Business. The Panel signaled the importance of small business issues by taking their first votes on adoption of those recommendations related to small business participation in federal procurement. The recommendations are the product of nearly a year long effort by a Panel working group comprised of representatives from the Small Business Administration (SBA), GSA, Department of Defense (DoD) and private industry. GSA’s representatives on this working group were Deidre Lee and Roger Waldron. The recommendations adopted by the Panel focus on four primary subjects:

- Affording small businesses greater opportunities in the growing government practice of awarding multiple contracts to fulfill government needs. Under this type of procurement, the government awards contracts to multiple vendors who compete with one another throughout the contract term





for recurring work. The Panel voted to authorize reserving prime contract awards for small business in full and open multiple award procurements that are not otherwise suitable for competition exclusively by small businesses. The Panel also voted to authorize limiting the competition for orders under multiple award contracts to small businesses.

- Resolving the long standing confusion over the government's various small business preference programs by allowing government contracting officers greater discretion to meet their agency's goals for awards to businesses in each category, such as those businesses owned by disabled veterans. Language adopted instructs contracting officers to use their agencies' goal achievements in each preference category and market research to guide their discretion.
- Delivering more training and best practices to improve government officials' understanding of small business programs so that use of these programs is maximized.
- Prohibiting the government's use of cascading procurements (sometimes called tiered procurements) which allows the government to determine after proposals are received whether a procurement will be reserved for a particular small business preference. The Panel determined that the practice impedes competition while increasing costs to small businesses in preparing proposals that the government may not ever consider for award.


Additional recommendations are still under review by the Panel, including a working group proposal to remove the limitation on sub-

contracting for small businesses that hold an award under a multi-agency contract.

Interagency Contracting. At its February 23rd public meeting, the Panel adopted recommendations addressing accountability and transparency shortfalls in managing interagency contracts and voted to establish a disciplined process for agencies contemplating the creation of such contracts. Interagency contracts accounted for 40% of the government's contracting dollars in Fiscal Year 2004, yet lack a consistent governmentwide policy regarding establishment and management. A lack of oversight and sound contracting practices resulted in the Government Accountability Office including interagency contracts on its High Risk Series report for 2005.

The recommendations were developed by a working group comprised of representatives from GSA, DoD, SBA, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and private industry. Deidre Lee and Roger Waldron also participated on this working group. The group's initial recommendations, adopted by the full Panel, cover all types of interagency contracts as well as agency functions, such as the franchise funds and other assisting entities, like GSA's Customer Service Centers and FEDSIM; programs that provide acquisition services to other agencies. The Panel also expressed concern that the potential for unproductive duplication may be heightened by a proliferation of single agency use contracts (e.g., enterprisewide contracts) that provide for the same products or services already available under a number of interagency contracts.

In addition to accountability, the recommendations are also designed to increase transparency in order to improve the government's ability to conduct effective spend analysis to support strategic sourcing. The working group attempted to balance the



need for increased transparency and accountability with the need for efficient purchasing on a volume basis. Specific recommendations include:

- Developing a system for institutionally collecting data accessible to the public regarding the number, types, and features of interagency contracts. Data will be collected for three distinct purposes: conducting market research on available contracts, monitoring trends in use by public and oversight organizations, and avoiding unproductive duplication of interagency or enterprisewide contracts or acquisition service functions. The Panel recommended that this effort be spearheaded by OFPP which is currently conducting a survey to provide an interim identification of these contracts and functions until a system for collection is available.
- Issuance of guidance, policy and regulation by OMB establishing a uniform practice for supporting an agency's decision to establish and manage these contracts and functions. The Panel was careful not to recommend that OMB be directly involved in each such decision, but rather provide a construct for deliberate accountability and transparency. The Panel did recommend having OMB direct ongoing periodic reviews of agency compliance with the new guidance.

The Panel will continue to meet publicly through July of this year to address the other procurement issues under their statutory charter, including commercial buying practices, performance-based contracting, contractors in the federal workplace, and the acquisition workforce. Ultimately a full panel

report will be submitted to OFPP and Congress. Public input is encouraged. Instructions for submitting written public comments are at the Panel's website at <http://www.acqnet.gov/aap>. For more information, please contact Laura Auletta at laura.auletta@gsa.gov or 202-208-7279.




PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OMB Establishes Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program

In April 2005 OFPP issued Policy Letter 05-01, focusing on improving the development of the acquisition workforce by more closely aligning civilian agency and DoD requirements. It called for the establishment of a federal contracting certification program, and it made recommendations for a federal certification program for program and project managers. These certification programs would reflect a standard for education, training, and experience leading to the fulfillment of core competencies.

In response, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memo effective January 20, 2006, outlining the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program (FAC-C). The program sets forth the requirements for education, training, and experience for those seeking federal certification in the contracting function, and it describes the process for requesting and granting FAC-C for the GS-1102 contracting series and other series. While the program is not mandatory, **members of the workforce issued new contracting officer warrants on or after January 1, 2007, must be certified at an appropriate level to support their warrant obligations.**



The FAC-C program applies to all executive agencies, with the exception of those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). The FAI Board of Directors, in consultation with FAI, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee, and other organizations as appropriate, will provide general program oversight. It will be administered by each civilian agency, with FAI conducting periodic reviews to ensure the program remains rigorous and certification standards are applied consistently. The certification process will be managed by each agency and administered by the appointed Acquisition Career Manager in that agency.

Achievement of FAC-C is based on three requirements: education, training, and experience, with the requirements being cumulative for each level of certification. To maintain FAC-C, acquisition professionals are required to earn 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years beginning October 1, 2007. The Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) is the official system of records for the program and will support the application process. The most current version of the program, competencies, required courses, and other FAC-C related information can be found at www.fai.gov. Questions regarding the program should be directed to FAI at questions@fai.gov or 703-805-2300.



Attend NCMA's World Congress 2006!

The National Contract Management Association's (NCMA's) World Congress 2006 will be held April 10-12 in Atlanta, Georgia, offering the opportunity to network, share information, and learn about contract

management trends, technology, best practices, and updates on legislation that affect you day to day. Following this year's theme, "Achieving High Performance in Global Business: Leadership, Outsourcing, and Risk Management," scheduled speakers include: Janet Davidson, President, Corporate Strategy and Business Development, Lucent Technologies, on "Leadership in Global Business;" Rik Kirkland, Global Editor, FORTUNE magazine, on "Rising to the Challenges of Global Business;" and Bryan D. O'Connor, Chief Safety and Mission Assurance Officer, NASA, on "Risk Management at NASA." World Congress offers more than 100 breakout sessions on a wide range of topics geared to your interests and experience, such as e-business, project management, contract law, supply chain management and logistics, defense contracting, and much more.

Maximize your career opportunities with intensive training at our one-day workshops April 8 on "Performance-Based Acquisition," "Contract Negotiations," and "NCMA's Certification Programs." Or, bring your resumes to the career center on April 9 for career advice or tips on how to interview. This is the ideal forum to access government and commercial contract management organizations that are ready to hire. "Connect with your colleagues" sessions are just one part of the World Congress experience. You will also have the opportunity to meet and learn from your colleagues at networking and social events. Make connections with professionals who share your interests—people who help you at every stage of your career. For the full details of World Congress 2006, please visit our website www.ncmahq.org/meetings/WC06/index.asp, or contact us at 800-344-8096.



GSA EXPO Coming Soon!

Be sure to attend GSA's 12th Annual International Products and Services Expo, in San Antonio, Texas, May 15 -18, 2006. The GSA Expo combines an extensive program of 250 training classes, most Continuous Learning Point (CLP) certified, with an exhibit floor of over 1,100 booths. Our vendors present their products and services available to you through GSA contracts. The GSA Expo can help you fulfill your annual continuing learning training and procurement needs.

Training topics will include:

- Performance Based Acquisition
- Multiple Award Schedule Training
- Temporary Duty Travel
- Reimbursable Work Authorizations
- GSA Assisted Contracting

This year's Expo highlights include:

- Classes taught by federal experts
- Over 600 commercial vendors on display
- All exhibitors are GSA contactors
- Over 100 JWOD partners will be exhibiting
- Earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs)

One of the workshop sessions to be held will be on "buying green." This will take place Tuesday, May 16th and be repeated May 17th. This 2-hour session, entitled, "GSA Makes Being Green Easy—Part 1: Your Legal Responsibility and the Latest Green Products and Services" will provide you with what you need to know so your agency will be able to meet its legal responsibility to buy Comprehensive Procurement Guideline

(CPG), Environmentally Preferable, Bio-Based and Energy Efficient Products. During the second half of this class you will be introduced to some of the latest green products. You'll see how GSA is making it easy for you to locate, buy, and be "Green." Speakers include Sandy Jones, GSA Southeastern Regional Environmental Coordinator; Dana Arnold, White House Task Force on Recycling; and a USDA representative speaking on Bio-Based Products.

For a complete listing of GSA EXPO classes, the list of vendors, the hotels, and to register to attend, click <http://www.expo.gsa.gov>. If you have questions call 1-888-272-5565.



Visit GSA's NFC Showroom

Every six months, GSA's National Furniture Center (NFC) displays different design selections of current furniture and related furnishings products from GSA schedules in our Showroom and Resource Library at The Washington Design Center, located at 300 D Street, SW, Suite 128, Washington, DC 20024. In cooperation with our commercial partners, the NFC is a "one-stop" shop for all furniture and furnishing solutions. Receive a complimentary design and product consultation with our furniture expert and showroom manager, Michael Rudderforth. He is always willing to recommend appropriate companies on GSA Schedule that meet your needs while addressing personality, style, and budget. In addition, the showroom's resource library contains a vast amount of catalogs from GSA contract partners. If you are interested in setting up an appointment for your

complimentary design and product consultation, please contact Mr. Rudderforth at michael.rudderforth@gsa.gov or 202-245-0046.



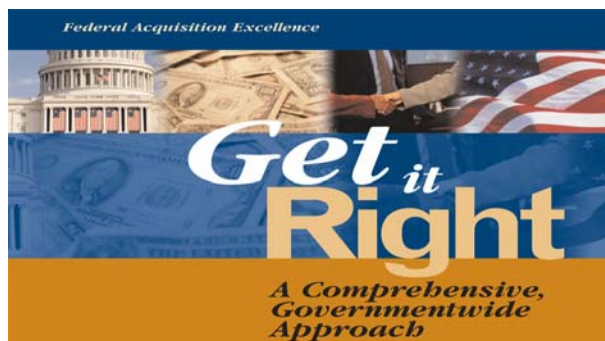
Conversations with Dr. Dorothy Height

“Young people walk through an open door, but they don’t know who opened it for them.”

--Dr. Dorothy Height

On February 9, 2006, Acting GSA Administrator David Bibb joined NCR leadership and associates at the region’s 2006 National African American History Program, “Conversations with Dr. Dorothy Height.” During the program, the Civil Rights icon, Chair and President Emerita of the National Council of Negro Women, and recipient of both the Presidential Medal of Freedom and Congressional Gold Medal spoke candidly about her life’s experiences. The program’s format was one of a question and answer forum with the audience where Dr. Height spoke about her life long achievements including her significant role in the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, her work with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the counsel she provided (and continues to provide) to ten U.S. presidents, her life-long experience as a champion for social justice, and more. During her lifetime, the 94-year-old civil rights pioneer witnessed every significant victory in the struggle for racial equality. To this day, Dr. Height continues to inspire us with her spirit

and wisdom and is a role model to all. For more information, contact Cherie McClung at cherie.mcclung@gsa.gov or 202-708-5110.




GETTING IT RIGHT AT GSA!

PMR Team Continues to “Get It Right”

Initially established in support of the Get It Right plan, the OCAO Procurement Management Review (PMR) team visits each GSA buying activity annually to review contracts from FAS and PBS. These reviews provide for a measure of quality assurance – that we are getting it right – they also provide an opportunity to help activities improve their contracting skills.

Each review team consists of individuals with contracting experience within the relevant contract portfolio – PBS or FAS. While the OCAO staff has the contracting experience, teams are supplemented with participants from different regions and services. The diversity of the teams ensures that we are taking into account current practices and allowing participants to see how other activities do their procurements. OCAO benefits from the additional expertise, while the volunteers gain further knowledge of the contracting process from a different point of view.

The PMR team completed reviews of 10 of the 11 regions last year – the team cancelled its review in late August to provide assistance in response to Hurricane Katrina. This year



will be a busy year for the team, as it will visit all 11 regions, the Central Office Operational Contracting Office, 4 IT Solutions National Programs, 3 Centers for Networks Services, as well as continuing to conduct reviews of hurricane related contracts within Regions 4, 5, and 7. Plans for 2006 include a best practices guide resulting from practices and tools the teams identified during the course of the reviews over the past two years.

Many associates in the regions have participated in the process. We are extremely grateful to all of the assistance the regions and services have provided to the PMR process, and look forward to you and your colleagues' participation again this year. Your assistance in reviewing files, identifying best practices and problem areas, identifying corrective actions, and providing feedback on the process are invaluable. The PMR team continues to welcome your comments, suggestions and constructive feedback. We are here to meet your needs as well as that of the entire acquisition community – we cannot be fully successful without your participation. If you have any interest in participating in the reviews with the PMR team, please contact your Acquisition Executive. To get more information on the PMR process, provide comments, or learn how to participate, contact Suzanne Bell at suzanne.bell@gsa.gov or 202-219-0310.

GWAC Training—Getting It Right

Today's rapidly evolving technology marketplace brings new advances as well as challenges to the acquisition workforce. Compounded by fewer resources and increased scrutiny of procurement practices by Congress, federal buyers today feel the pressure to increase productivity without putting themselves or their agency at risk. This environment drives forward the opportunity to seek out effective and efficient acquisition tools such as performance work statements

and established contracts that minimize risk yet remain flexible and easy to use. GSA's governmentwide acquisition contracts (GWACs) are an example of one such tool.

The GWAC value proposition is centered on the attention given to customers in the areas of acquisition, education, and support in the use of these vehicles. The educational assistance and attention offered by the GWAC Centers is a key component in enhancing scope compliance, customer satisfaction and growing reach throughout the government. One of the many quality assurance measures found within the GWAC program evolves around delegation of ordering authority. Each ordering contracting officer must receive training and be granted a delegation of authority prior to issuing any task orders against a GSA GWAC. This technique serves not only to mitigate risk in placing orders and educate on proper use, it also allows the GWAC staff to develop a loyal and highly satisfied customer base.

To create a quality education process, the GWAC Centers have taken a holistic approach to mitigate risk by incorporating training for both federal customers and industry partners. With proper training and guidance from the Centers, industry partners can become good stewards of their contracts and satisfied business partners. The GWAC Centers offer a variety of training venues including telephone, online, conferences, events, and on site. Regardless of the platform, the GWAC Centers have created materials designed to support all educational opportunities while encouraging customer interaction and understanding in the use of these vehicles.

Even though the GSA organization will continue to change, the need to seek new and innovative ways to assist our customers in meeting the demands of tomorrow's technology and acquisition environments



remains. GSA is looking to the future by forming new GWACs designed with these challenges in mind. For instance, the new Alliant program will offer robust, comprehensive contracts for a wide range of technology solutions that maximizes small business subcontracting participation, and a separate Alliant solicitation for small businesses. In addition, the process is well underway toward awarding a new GWAC that is set aside for small technology firms owned by Service-Disabled Veterans. These new contracts combine industry and customer input with research, best practices, successes and lessons learned to offer quality contracts that lessen the risk without compromising value.

GSA's GWAC Centers offer a wide variety of training tools and resources including information about the GWACs availability through e-Library and e-Buy. Additional resources include:

GWAC Overview Online Training:
www.fsstraining.gsa.gov

On GSA.gov at www.gsa.gov/gwacs
Contact: The Enterprise GWAC Center (ANSWER, Millennia, & future Alliant)
www.gsa.gov/egc,
877-534-2208

The Greater Southwest Acquisition Center (Millennia Lite, Smart Card)
www.gsa.gov/itgwaccenter,
877-929-4822

The Small Business GWAC Center (HUBZone, 8(a) STARS, & future VETS & Alliant Small Business),
www.gsa.gov/sbgwac,
877-327-8732

For more information on this article, contact Jean Oyler at jean.oyler@gsa.gov or 816-823-3358.



SMALL BUSINESS CORNER

SDVOSB Wins Major Contract

GSA's Northeast and Caribbean Region recently awarded a \$1.3 million contract to S & S Construction Services, a division of Sheen and Shine of Rochester, New York, a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB). The contract is for the construction of the kitchen and food service area in the cafeteria of the new U.S. Courthouse that recently opened in downtown Brooklyn, New York. "This is a significant award that not only helps GSA meet President Bush's 3% goal for government agency contracting with service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, but clearly demonstrates this administration's commitment to our military veterans, especially those who have made extraordinary sacrifices in the service of this country," said Eileen Long-Chelales, Northeast and Caribbean Region Administrator.

In December 2003, President Bush and Congress enacted the Veterans Benefits Act which established greater economic entrepreneurial opportunities for the 2.2 million service-disabled veterans in the U.S. The legislation also established a preference for the federal government to contract with SDVOSBs. Israel Cuyler, President and CEO of Sheen and Shine, is a service-disabled Army veteran of the Vietnam War. To help

advance this effort, GSA's Northeast and Caribbean Region last year offered networking opportunities for SDVOSB's to enable them to present their business capabilities, goods and services to the agency's regional building managers, contracting specialists and engineering teams. S & S Construction Services was among the companies that participated. For more information, contact Renee Miscione at renee.miscione@gsa.gov or 212-264-0424.



White House Summit on Federal Sustainable Buildings

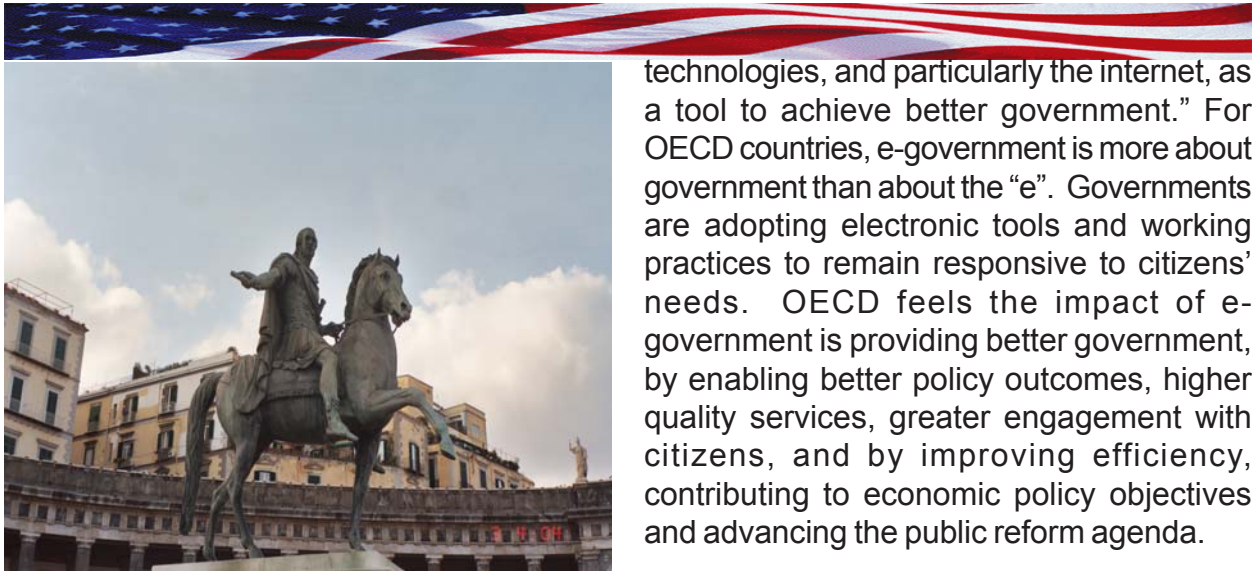
On January 24, PBS Commissioner David Winstead joined 18 other agencies to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Federal Leadership in High Performance and Sustainable Buildings during the first White House Summit on Federal Sustainable Buildings. The agreement establishes a federal commitment and common goals for designing, constructing and maintaining buildings in an energy efficient and sustainable manner. Before signing, Winstead spoke on "Improving Sustainable Performance in Federal Buildings." He emphasized GSA's commitment to sustainable design and that GSA must consider all factors when locating federal agencies, including taking greater advantage of existing transportation infrastructure. Other PBS speakers included Sam Hunter, Assistant Commissioner for Applied Science, speaking on "Implementing a Sustainable Building Program, and Don Horn, Director of Sustainable Design, on "Sustainable Design Innovation at GSA." On the second day of the Summit, new OMB scorecards were introduced for energy, environmental and transportation management. GSA was one of only three agencies to meet green on the draft energy scorecard. For more information, contact Donald Horn at donald.horn@gsa.gov or 202-501-4525.



GREEN PROCUREMENT

Have you "Got GAPP?"

GSA's Regional Environmental Coordinator, Sandy Jones, recently took "GSA Makes Being Green Easy" training on the road. All employees of GSA's Memphis Customer Service Center received training in buying green products and services on February 23rd. The training included GSA's Environmental Policy and Green Affirmative Procurement Program (GAPP) Training. The GAPP training includes the legal requirements to purchase environmental preferable products including EPA's CPG items and record keeping for the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) report. This training will also be held at the GSA Expo in May. For more information, contact Sandy Jones at sandy.jones@gsa.gov or 404-331-1841.



technologies, and particularly the internet, as a tool to achieve better government.” For OECD countries, e-government is more about government than about the “e”. Governments are adopting electronic tools and working practices to remain responsive to citizens’ needs. OECD feels the impact of e-government is providing better government, by enabling better policy outcomes, higher quality services, greater engagement with citizens, and by improving efficiency, contributing to economic policy objectives and advancing the public reform agenda.

IAE CORNER


International Seminar on e-Procurement

Julie Basile of OMB, currently detailed to GSA, attended the 1st High Level Seminar on e-Procurement sponsored by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Program in Naples, Italy in January. Ms. Basile, OMB’s Champion for e-Procurement, was an invited guest representing the U.S. government at the request of Marty Wagner, Acting Commissioner, FAS. Participating countries included Italy, Dubai, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon.

The seminar, “Strengthening Good Governance for Development in Arab Countries,” was held at the invitation of the Italian government to support the Working Group on e-Government and Administrative Simplification, chaired by Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. The purpose of the event was to bring together e-government experts from Arab countries and OECD countries to share strategic advice and practical know-how on implementing e-procurement systems and simplifying administrative processes.

The OECD definition of e-government is “the use of information and communication

Ms. Basile helped to support the discussions, provide comments on other country’s implementation and engage in policy discussion on challenges to implement e-procurement solutions and strategies. She led the session “Process Re-engineering, Simplification and Transparency in e-Procurement” which included examples of metrics, a discussion on privatization, and examples of the U.S. government’s progress in e-procurement. One of the examples she was able to pull from was the GSA managed e-Gov initiative, Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE). Seminar participants were interested in the re-engineering and simplification of procedures, eliminating duplicative processes, generating support for embracing new procedures, and advancing processes that increase transparency. All of the participants were in agreement that one of their foremost goals was to thwart corruption and bribery in the procurement of goods and awarding of contracts. In Italy, contractors hoping to do business with the Italian Government are required to certify that they are not part of the Mafia before they are allowed to bid on any government contracts. Other sessions touched on topics such as key technology challenges, organizational structure, required managerial skills, and international cooperation in the field of e-procurement. Speakers of note included Rachele Gianfranchi-Hirschhofer, World Bank



Global InfoComm Technologies Division, and Rehab Lootah, Acting Director of e-Services Dubai Government, as well as a number of prominent professors from Italian universities.

Following presentations on each topic, Arab countries were invited to contribute specific examples of their country's approach to e-procurement. Dubai's presentation indicated that they have made far more progress than most of the other countries represented. They have commitment, infrastructure, and have a paperless system of e-procurement. Italy reported on the formation of an organization comparable to GSA's FAS from which all Italian agencies are required to buy their IT. The sponsors are planning to follow up on progress made at the next seminar which will be held in Dubai in May. They intend to continue discussions on how to improve implementation and share lessons learned from other countries that are attempting to develop e-procurement systems. For more information on this article, contact Lisa Cliff, IAE Office of Communications at integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov or 703-872-8593.


FedTeDS: A Post-9/11 Procurement Process

by Diana Clontz, FedTeDS PMO Support

Since September 11, 2001, we all recognize the potential risks and inherent vulnerabilities we face as a free and democratic nation. At any time a single security breach could lead to the next devastating event. Post 9/11 many processes have changed (like checking in to airports) and the procurement process also had to change since the need increased to eliminate the unauthorized use of and control access to sensitive information such as weapon shipments, floor plans, site maps, security systems, and continuity of operations plans.

In the post-9/11 environment, government officials are torn between sharing information related to solicitations in order to maximize competition and maintaining the security of the U.S. Bidders often need access to sensitive information to successfully complete a bid. Because of this critical balance, government officials must consider several factors in their acquisition process. On the one hand, it is in the best interest of citizens for the public sector to maximize open competition regarding its business opportunities. Open competition helps to ensure that the government will receive the greatest possible value and quality for any potential investments. On the other hand, citizens' security should not be compromised during this competitive process.

With the ubiquitous application of the internet, vendors can easily do business with the government and obtain the necessary information to successfully complete a bid. FedBizOpps, the single government point-of-entry for federal government procurement opportunities, allows public access to data associated with business opportunities. However, legitimate vendors are not the only community trying to view solicitation information, especially that which is considered sensitive. Currently, over 90 federal agencies disseminate sensitive materials during the solicitation phase of procurement using the internet. This material includes information related to operations; weapon systems and plans; transit authority; structures; and individuals and services essential to the security and management of a facility, including telecommunications, electrical power, building facility structural layout, gas and oil storage/transportation, water supply, emergency services and continuity of operations. As the U.S. is increasingly involved in the war on terror, it is more important than ever before that sensitive information be controlled.



The federal government established the Federal Technical Data Solutions (FedTeDS) to help ensure access to sensitive data is monitored in a controlled environment. FedTeDS is an online system designed to safeguard sensitive acquisition-related information for all federal agencies. It effectively balances availability and security of sensitive information; FedTeDS safeguards activity between the federal government and its public customers while ensuring user satisfaction is not minimized. This application was developed to specifically meet two vital requirements: 1) electronic availability and distribution of documentation; and 2) providing a process for visibility of vendors handling this type of documentation. By posting the sensitive documentation on the FedTeDS site, the government contracting officer can implement multiple levels of security to control and monitor access to the documentation. For example, a contracting officer can protect critical solicitation data by implementing FedTeDS' highest level of control, Explicit Access. Explicit Access requires all vendors trying to download solicitation information to be individually approved by the Government User. This control setting effectively balances competition and safeguards while allowing the Government User to track individuals who have access to the technical documents posted.

FedTeDS is fully integrated within IAE (www.acquisition.gov). As a unique web application within IAE, FedTeDS not only enables the dissemination of sensitive acquisition material, it also interfaces with FedBizOpps (www.fedbizopps.gov) to make the procurement process smoother. In addition, FedTeDS incorporates data from other sources, including the Central Contractor Registration (www.ccr.gov) and the Defense Logistics Information Service's export controlled database, to authenticate vendor users and validate their access to sensitive

acquisition information.

Because of the high importance and necessity of monitoring and controlling access to sensitive procurement-related data, the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council recently approved the addition of the following to FAR Case, Part 5: "information that requires additional controls to monitor access and distribution [...] should be made available through the Federal Technical Data Solution (FedTeDS)." OFPP signed off on the FedTeDS mandate, and as of February 9, 2006, OMB cleared this ruling to be published.

Whenever procurements arise that require the public dissemination of acquisition-related technical data, consider whether this information is sensitive. If so, remember that FedTeDS is available to safeguard your data. For more information, contact Lisa Cliff, IAE Office of Communications, at integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov or 703-872-8593.



SECTION 508 UPDATE

The Buy Accessible System

The Buy Accessible Wizard is the user interface to the Buy Accessible System and is the one tool you must have to ensure Section 508 compliance. The key to successful compliance is having an effective, repeatable process that produces concise, consistent and efficient consideration of Section 508. The Buy Accessible Wizard is the only tool that provides this process and produces an audit trail by documenting all decisions relative to Section 508, including:

- Establishing whether or not the acquisition is subject to Section 508 requirements
- Determining which provisions from the Access board standard apply
- Finding sources for doing accessibility market research
- Documenting accessibility market research from all sources
- Documenting appropriate exceptions

Anyone can use the Buy Accessible Wizard by going to www.buyaccessible.gov. The Wizard is available at GSA via an intranet application.

The Buy Accessible Data Center is the vendor interface to the Buy Accessible System. Vendors provide links to information about company commitment to accessibility and Section 508 and product or service conformance to specific technical accessibility requirements. The Data Center continues to grow as more vendors are adding accessibility information.

Coming soon! As of today only registered users at GSA can take advantage of the SAVE feature in the Wizard. These users can pause and resume a session, go back and edit previous sessions, and share session information for the purposes of collaboration and review. By this summer unregistered users (those using the Wizard at www.buyaccessible.gov) will also be able to take advantage of this feature. More information about this feature will be included in the next edition of this newsletter. To find out if you are a registered user at GSA (or how to become a registered user) contact Doug Smith at douglas.smith@gsa.gov or 202-501-2995. For more information about the Buy Accessible tools, contact Terry Weaver at terry.weaver@gsa.gov or 202-501-4906.



GSA/JWOD STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program creates jobs and training opportunities for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities. Established by Congress, the JWOD Program is a public-private partnership through which the federal government uses its acquisition policies to support this important socioeconomic objective. The Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is the independent federal agency that administers the Program. NISH (creating employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities) is one of the two national nonprofit organizations designated by the Committee to help federal agencies and nonprofit organizations that employ persons with severe disabilities participate in the JWOD Program. For more information about the JWOD Program, please contact Stephanie Lesko at slesko@jwod.gov or visit www.jwod.gov.



New Quality Custodial Certification Program for GSA Contracts

by Gisele McAuliff

[Editor's note—This article is reprinted with permission from "NISH Workplace," August 2005, Pages 18, 19, and 21.]

The quality of custodial services provided to government customers through the JWOD Program will be officially recognized and upheld by a new, industry certification process. In recent weeks, NISH implemented a quality custodial services certification program for all GSA/PBS contracts.

On August 3, 2005, Fedcap of New York became the first nonprofit agency (NPA) in the country to receive custodial service certification from NISH. Bob Chamberlin, NISH president and CEO, personally presented the certification plaque. "Quality is a differentiating factor for the Centers for Excellence program," Chamberlin said. "It is what makes our NPAs stand out from other nonprofits." Speaking directly to Fedcap staff, Chamberlin also added, "While a wonderful feather has been placed in your cap, it's only the beginning. The certification process encourages continual vigilance in excellence."

The NISH certification process employs industry benchmarks to affirm and raise the level of performance, quality and consistency of custodial work performed by all JWOD contractors serving GSA. Fedcap and another NPA, Lakeview of Pensacola, Florida, have been designated by NISH as "Centers of Excellence" for custodial services to assist and provide guidance to other NPAs as they go through the custodial certification process. "One of the things we learned from undergoing certification is that there is always room for improvement," said Susan Fonfa, executive director of Fedcap. "As a Center of Excellence, we are committed to process improvement and helping other NPAs and


ourselves to do better, for the benefit of the people we serve and our Government customers."

"At Lakeview, we found the certification program to be helpful to our own operations and we are very excited about assisting other NPAs," said Russ Schreiner, administrator, Center of Excellence at Lakeview Center in Pensacola, Florida. "I think the certification program will provide NPAs seeking certification a road map to improve their custodial services. We will be one of the tools available to NPAs that are looking for assistance."

The new certification program stems from the strategic alliance of GSA/PBS, the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled and NISH that recognizes JWOD as the vendor of choice to perform custodial services for PBS. "The Custodial Certification Program puts NISH and NPAs on a more level playing field with commercial custodial services," said Debbie Bantz, procurement analyst for GSA/PBS Region 5. "Certification provides our property managers and contracting agents with a vital benchmark of quality from which they can evaluate the NPA's ability to meet their requirements."

Under this agreement, all of the approximately 180 NPAs that currently perform custodial services for GSA/PBS must get certified and a schedule to implement this initiative will be rolled out later this year. Each agency will be contacted by NISH at least 30 days prior to establishing a timeframe that fits within each NPA's schedule. All NPAs will be certified during FY06 and FY07 and certification requirements will be determined by the size and dollar value of the NPA's GSA/PBS custodial contracts.

Certification offers a long list of benefits to the Government customer and NPA contractor. First, there is the recognition that the NPA



offers a customer-focused, quality assurance management system that is based on nationally recognized practices in the custodial industry. The results include increased customer satisfaction, reduced deductions, and an improved NPA and government customer relationship. Most importantly, all of these positive outcomes are sure to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities nationwide.

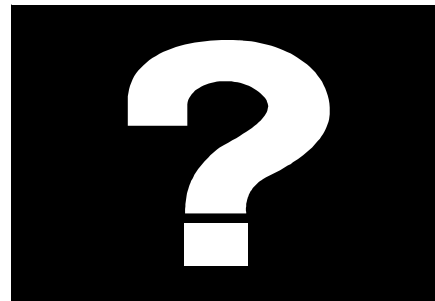
Certification represents an NPA's ongoing commitment to continual process improvement and customer satisfaction in custodial services. It examines quality control and assurance, customer satisfaction, contract management and experience, strategic planning, training, compensation and regulatory compliance. Certification will be presented to NPAs that have successfully completed a thorough review of their business practices to ensure all elements of their quality assurance systems are integrated to provide greater efficiency and customer satisfaction. They will have documented their management processes, implemented customer-focused quality assurance systems, and met all regulatory requirements of the JWOD Program.

As a general practice, the operational areas reviewed and evaluated by the Custodial Certification Process are:

- Agency Information/Basic Structure/ Support Functions
- Training Processes of Employees/ Management
- Proper Use of Subcontractors
- Wages/Benefits
- General Insurance
- Quality Control Systems and Documentation
- Custodial Experience
- Company Personnel Section
- Industry Knowledge

- References
- Policies and Procedures
- Contract Management
- Additional Services

Following the certification process, NPAs will be notified of the results, and a list of short-term and long-term recommendations will be provided to improve the organization's overall quality and contract performance. Based on these recommendations, NISH will provide the resources an NPA needs to improve (such as specific training, technical assistance staff visits, compliance kits, video tapes, various custodial manuals, and more). For more information about the Custodial Certification Process, contact John Carmichael, NISH senior program manager, at 571-226-4652 or jcarmichael@nish.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know e-Buy from GSA helps you find the right sources for your requirements? Online tools from GSA deliver functional, easy-to-use solutions to all of your acquisition needs—including resources that may help fulfill strategic sourcing requirements. Use e-Buy to find the best sources and speed your solicitation process. With e-Buy you can create RFQs for everything GSA offers on its Schedules and GWACS. You can exchange requirements and quotes by e-mail and update information on the RFQ as necessary. For more information, visit www.gsa.gov/powerup or call the GSA Advantage! helpdesk toll free at 877-472-3777.



CHECK IT OUT!

“Check It Out!” highlights upcoming conferences and events of interest to the GSA acquisition community. If you’d like to have your conference or event listed in this column, please send an e-mail to the Editor, judy.steele@gsa.gov with the pertinent information including a point of contact.

NCMA’s World Congress 2006

Hyatt Regency Atlanta
Atlanta, GA
April 10 – 12, 2006
www.ncmahq.org

Knowledge Management Conference

“Integration, Action and Results”
Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, DC
April 19-21, 2006
<http://events.fcw.com/event/KM06>
800-746-0099

FedSources 21st Annual Federal Outlook Conference

Hilton McLean
Tyson’s Corner, VA
April 27, 2006
www.fedsources.com
800-210-6326

3rd Annual itsGov “Technology Buying at Year-End” Conference

Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, DC
July 26, 2006
www.itsGov.com
800-746-0099

We thank our guest authors for their contributions to this newsletter. Guest authors express their own views, which are provided for the information of our newsletter readers. 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 with comments or suggestions.

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