



SMALL BUSINESS MATTERS

For members of the Small Business Community

FEBRUARY 2014

AF Awards EOD Contract to SDVOSB

By Connie Robben, AFICA

Many of us have seen it in movies like the *Hurt Locker*, highly trained explosive ordnance (EOD) professionals risking their lives to save others. In real life and for the past 10 years, EOD professionals have experienced some of the highest operations tempo ever. The achievements of our Airmen as critical counter improvised explosive device (C-IED) enablers supporting the Joint Task Force commanders in both Iraq and Afghanistan and the Air Component Commander throughout United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) have been phenomenal--they executed over 45,000 missions within USCENTCOM and another 43,000 outside of USCENTCOM.

Adequate training and properly maintained equipment are key for EOD warfighters to respond when needed. What if they were not trained? What if their equipment was not maintained, and there was no accountability? Scary prospect isn't it?

The Air Mobility Command (AMC) Readiness and Emergency Management Division, Installations and Mission Support (HQ AMC/A7X) at Scott Air Force Base was faced with such a dilemma in 2010, when the Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane Division (NSWC) informed them they would no longer be able to provide contracted EOD support to Air Force locations. Support was to continue under the existing Naval contract through Sept. 18, 2012, but in July 2011, NSWC notified HQ AMC/A7X that they would not be able to provide the same level of support previously provided.

The EOD contract supported all U.S. Air Force CONUS and OCONUS bases and headquarter staffs by

managing EOD training and training documentation; maintaining EOD tools and equipment; conducting unit self-inspections; accessing status and capability of EOD units; assisting EOD flight management; managing status of resources, training and the Air Expeditionary Force Reporting Tool (ART); managing EOD mobility procedures and determining ground and explosive safety requirements.

As a result of this surprise notice, A7X took the requirement to the 763rd Specialized Contracting Squadron at Scott AFB (previously known as HQ AMC/A7KQ) to request assistance with the follow-on contract. The 763rd Contracting Squadron accepted the challenge and Contracting Officer Jennifer Gasparich went right to work. In order to determine the acquisition strategy, a combination of market research techniques were used, including a Sources Sought Notice with a draft Performance Work Statement, which was posted on the Federal Business Opportunities website. Eleven vendors responded to the sources sought with their capabilities, comments, concerns, and risks. As a result of the extensive market research and after thorough review of the eleven responses, it was clear that a 100% competitive Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) set-aside would be viable. The acquisition team met with the SDVOSB respondents one-on-one to ensure they were capable of performing the work.

Despite multiple protests, which were ultimately withdrawn or denied, and much hard work to maintain continuity of services for both CONUS and

SAF/SB & SAF/AQ FY 14/15 Initiatives

By Narda Vega, Editor-in-Chief

As the 2014 calendar year is underway, our Small Business Community is already working towards making FY14 a successful one. As reflected in the SAF/SB and SAF/AQ FY14 SB initiatives shown below, small businesses will be at the forefront of our acquisition efforts.

- Establish SB as a Senior Acquisition Executive FY14 Priority
- Emphasis on more SB Breakout Opportunities
- Develop a CONOPS for SB Market Research Cell
- Recurring SB Industry Roundtables w SAF/AQ and PEOs
- Improve SB Opportunity Forecast
- Improve SB Accessible Market Performance

Efforts are underway for the very first SB Industry Roundtable scheduled for February 27, here in DC. At this SAF/SB and SAF/AQ co-organized event, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition Dr. LaPlante will be the chair of the Roundtable and engage small Business CEOs to discuss the current state of Air Force Acquisition, SAF/AQ priorities, and identify opportunities for Air Force and Industry collaboration. Stay tuned through our DCOs for more information.



Master Sgt. John Beebe clears an improvised explosive device during training at an air base in Southwest Asia. Beebe is assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron.

EOD, continued

OCONUS locations, the contracting officer issued seven task orders in August 2013 to R3 Strategic Support Group, a SDVOSB with employees who were previous EOD professionals. The new contract represents a \$21M cost reduction.

The SDVOSB support contractors enable Air Force EOD personnel to concentrate on sharpening the skills that are critical to their mission sets. They provide essential services within the EOD flight that allows EOD personnel the ability to continue to provide global combat support and EOD response across the full spectrum of military operations.

Who better to provide service to our military than service-disabled veterans with prior EOD experience and genuine concern for our military's safety!

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DTIC SB Opportunities

By Sylvia Linke, AFICA

Director of the Defense Technical Information Center Small Business Operating Location, Air Force Installation Contracting Agency Small Business Office (AFICA/SB) Sylvia Linke was one of the three speakers at a National Headquarters of the Professional Services Council meeting Nov. 14, 2013. The other speakers were Director of the Department of Defense (DoD) Information Analysis Centers (IACs) Christopher Zember, Director of the Department of Defense (DoD) Information Analysis Centers (IACs), and Stanley Stearns, contracting officer for AFICA Operating Location for Information Analysis Center Program Contracting Support (AFIC/KD) at Offutt Air Force Base. The purpose of the meeting was to inform Professional Services Council members as well as members of the public, about the recent restructuring of the Department of Defense (DoD) Information Analysis Centers (IACs) and the associated new small business opportunities the restructuring has made possible.

Discussion focused on the planned 2015 acquisition, five year, \$2B indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ), multiple-award contract for Cyber Security and Information Systems Technical Area Tasks (CS TATs)

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the conference featured speakers from federal, state, city, county and private organizations. This year's opening keynote speaker was Emmitt Smith, former Dallas Cowboys football star, competitive dancer and owner of EJ Smith Construction Company, a leading African-American owned bridge builder in Texas.

Colonel Michael Luft, AFICA OL San Antonio Director of Contracting, a speaker at the conference for the second year, presented "Maximizing Contracting Opportunities in the Federal Marketplace." Luft provided current information concerning U.S. Air Force installation contracting transformation and specific details regarding contracting for Joint Base San Antonio.



Valeria Arias, left, from Joint Base San Antonio Randolph, and Debbie Woods, from Joint Base San Antonio Lackland Contracting Squadron, assist small business visitors at the AFICA/AETC Exhibit booth.

2013 Bexar County SMWVOB Conference

By Col. Michael Luft, AFICA

Members of Air Force Installation Contracting Agency (AFICA) San Antonio Operating Location (OL) and Air Education and Training Command (AETC) supported the 2013 Bexar County Small Minority Women & Veteran Owned Business (SMWVOB) conference December 11, 2013. The conference was a forum for small business owners to develop relationships, acquire knowledge, and access opportunities existing with public and private sector entities. In addition to numerous workshops and an expo hall featuring 150 exhibitors,



Emmitt Smith, retired NFL running back from the Dallas Cowboys, left, and Col. Michael Luft greet each other during the 2013 Bexar County SMWVBO Contracting Conference.

DESP III Increases SB

By AFMC, HILL AFB DESP III

Design Engineering Support Program (DESP III) is a five-year multiple award Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) contract vehicle providing a broad range of engineering services for the Air Force and other DoD agencies. The contract ceiling amount is set at \$1.9 billion. There are 26 prime contractors, six being small businesses.

Above best practices paid off--the DESP III program acquisition process reduced sole source task orders from 44% on DESP II to 5.26% on DESP III (% of total orders). The total percentage of dollars awarded on DESP III to SBs came to: 58.53%, an increase from 12.5% in



the last year of DESP II. More information can be obtained at Centralized Office (Hill AFB) Program Manager: 801-777-5030.

DESP III Best Practices

In order to facilitate small business (SB) participation within DESP III and future acquisitions, the Acquisition Team at Hill AFB has put in place the following best practices:

- 1 Leadership Support, Early Involvement and Close Coordination with Key Team Members.** The DESP III Program Manager encourages small business set asides on all acquisitions. In addition, overall acquisition effort includes early and close coordination with other ordering centers at Tinker and Warner Robins AFBs and teaming with SB and Competition Advocates representatives.
- 2 Industry Day.** The team holds an industry day with other centers and SBs to provide them a first glance at the requirements allow for feedback on proposal language and discuss items that may have limited competition.
- 3 Task Order Review Board (TORB).** Following the industry day, the TORB members conduct a critical review of the requirement documents and validate any changes requested during industry day.
- 4 On-ramp Strategy Contract.** The team structured the DESP III contract to allow for subcontractors to be added at any time during the contract.
- 5 Acquisition Range Identified Early.** The team identifies the acquisition range for all efforts on the initial notification. This action helps companies determine if the contract fits within their business plans and capabilities and allows them sufficient time to prepare for the RFI/RFP process.
- 6 Rule of Two.** The team applies the rule of 2 to RFI responses. If two capable SBs do not respond to the RFI, then the acquisition is opened to all prime contractors (which still allows for SBs to compete in a full and open competition environment).
- 7 Unlimited Data Rights.** To keep doors widely opened for increased competition in future acquisitions, the DESP III contract requires unlimited data rights on all task orders, unless clear justification is provided.
- 8 Notice of Award and Debrief.** The team provides a notice of award and debrief on all DESP III orders regardless of dollar amount. The debrief helps the non-winners to learn how to improve their involvement with the RFP process. (Per FAR 15.506 debriefs are only required on acquisitions >\$5M)



The Spotlight:

Graham Pritchett

Director of Business Operations
319th Contracting Flight, Grand Forks AFB

How did you get into this field? What lead you to work in the small business community?

I obtained my bachelor's degree in public administration, which led me to work in government/non-profit type work, especially on the business side. I accepted a position in federal government contracting (series 1102) nearly 27 years ago, here at the 319th Contracting Flight (AMC), and have worked my way up to my current position as director of Business Operations, which encompasses the half-time small business specialist position.

What other positions have you held?

I started as a temp procurement clerk, then became a contracting specialist, the supply acquisition flight chief, the service acquisition flight chief, the acquisition flight chief and since April 2007, my current position, the director of Business Operations/small business specialist. Small business and federal government contracting goes hand-in-hand.

What is your biggest challenge when it comes to working with small businesses?

Pushing them to get over the intimidation of doing business with the government or Grand Forks AFB. I tell them that there are certainly lots of rules, regulations and processes out there but you just have to dive in and tackle it head on. Some accept this and dive head first into that challenge, some don't. Those that do are usually successful and glad they made that decision. I enjoy meeting up with them again, perhaps a year or two later to see they've succeeded in cracking the market of doing business with the Air Force.

What is the best part of your job?

No doubt, assisting small businesses and educating them on the federal government contracting process so they can explore if it's a good fit for them. Obviously, there's a quagmire of government rules and regulations out there that can be quite confusing or even intimidating, but by educating them, they are more at ease and less intimidated by it all. When I tell them that Grand Forks AFB competes nearly 90% of its procurements and more than 80% of our dollars go to small businesses, then they're really interested in potentially doing business with us! It's the position I've enjoyed the most, because it encompasses everything in the office. It's not as narrow-focused as my previous positions.

What would you like small businesses to know when it comes to doing business with the Air Force?

There are plenty of opportunities to do business with us if they dig deep and hard, be patient in learning the system, and we're very open to doing business with small businesses.

DTIC, continued

research and analysis services. Attendees were interested in the process the Air Force is using to gather market intelligence, especially the Request for Information (RFI), which collects information on each respondent's capacity, capability, and financial viability. The RFI was prepared by a team composed of the contracting officer, the Program Office, and the directors of AFICA/SB and its SB DTIC Operating Location. Attendees responded favorably to the innovative communication strategy developed for the Technical Area Tasks acquisitions. Some of the strategies featured on CS TATs are an advance planning matrix for upcoming requirements (this information flows down to subcontractors, as appropriate); release of draft task order Request for Proposals (RFPs) for review/comment as applicable; and maintaining open dialogue on "no-bids" from contractors with the intent to reduce barriers to effective competition.

★★★ Small Business ★★★ Hail & Farewell

Please join us in welcoming William "Bill" Harrison to the AFMC small business team. Bill will be the new Director of Small Business for AFRL.

SAF/SB would also like to bid farewell to Ms. Karen Campbell, outgoing Small Business Specialist and Director of Business Operations at 366th Contracting Squadron (26 years of service) and Mr. Dwight Slotto, outgoing Small Business Specialist and Director of Business Operations at AFGSC/SB (26 years of service). Their combined hard work, professionalism and commitment to small business have greatly benefitted the Air Force. They will be missed.