

Alaska Procurement Connection

A Monthly Newsletter From Your Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

January 2007

Winter Project List

Contributed by Mary Sheehan (fnmhs@uaf.edu)

As a small business owner, it's always a good idea to maintain a running list of projects to accomplish during slow periods. Now, with winter setting in, it might be time to accomplish some of those projects. Some suggestions are:

✓ Check your Central Contractor Registration and SBA Profile to ensure that they are accurate and current.

✓ Register in relevant databases such as ORCA and in FedTeds (which includes COE projects) to access technical data, make certain that your business has a log ins and passwords for these systems.

✓ Make a hard copy file of your log ins and passwords and place it in a secure location.

✓ Research questions or issues that you have been wondering about. For example, do you know the actual definition of a small business?

✓ Locate business resources. Find out what types of relevant business assistance local organizations offer.

✓ Determine if your business can qualify for any small business certifications and whether or not they would benefit your business.

✓ Look into professional organizations that also might be able to help your business grow and decide whether you should become a member. Now is a great time to do some extra networking.

✓ Identify and attend relevant training. Do you need to learn more about bidding/estimating? Are you struggling with accounting requirements? Do you need assistance in marketing?

✓ Examine and update your marketing plan. Be sure to include items such as business cards; line cards or Statement of Qualifications; and resumes.

✓ Schedule visits and briefings with procurement personnel.

✓ Review procurement forecasts for upcoming projects offered by key agencies. These forecasts are an excellent tool to track projects you may be interested in. A list of websites for this information is provided on page 2.

There are probably dozens more projects you could add to your list. If you need assistance navigating through any of these items, please call your local PTAC office.

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Check out the PTAC Calendar of Events for Upcoming Opportunities!

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**University of Alaska
Small Business
Development Center**

Project Forecast Websites

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Most agencies maintain some type of procurement forecast for each fiscal year, and sometimes beyond. This information can be a tool to track potential projects.

U.S Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/contracting/default.asp> (scroll to bottom and, under Information, select Alaska District Project Forecast for Fiscal 2006-2007)

Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.sbo.faa.gov/sbo/Content/Contracting/ProcurementForecast.aspx> (In Display Forecast, select Alaska Region)

Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.fido.gov/dhs/aap/publicviewsb.asp>

Alaska Railroad Corporation Projects: <http://www.akrr.com/ARRC14.html>

ADOT&PF Tentative Advertising Schedule (construction): <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/procurement/bidding/schedule/index.shtml>

ADOT&PF Long Range Plans: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/areaplans/index.shtml>

Fairbanks North Star Borough Estimated Bid Schedule: <http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/PublicWorks/Projects/estbidschedule.aspx>

Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department & PM&E Projects Online: <http://www.muni.org/planning/Projects.cfm>
<http://munimaps.muni.org/PMEProjects/>

Aloha from Mary Wheeler



Aloha (hello)! I have been with PTAC Alaska as the Fairbanks Program Assistant for five years. I am both happy and sad to say this is my farewell.

I am happy because we are moving to Hawaii, where I can

grow plants year round, enjoy the salt air and turtles, and try some new fishing methods and some new foods. I am sad because I leave behind some of the most intriguing people in the nation—people who are ready to create what is needed, and who are unafraid of new challenges.

We have lived in this great state for 22 years, longer than any other place we have lived. I will miss all but the cold—my body needs a break. Stop by to say hello any time you are in Ocean View on the Big Island of Hawaii. Aloha (farewell).

DoD Value Engineering Program

Contributed by Robert Brunett (anreb2@uaa.alaska.edu)

Value Engineering (VE) was developed at General Electric Corporation during World War II and is widely used in industry and government, particularly in areas such as defense, transportation, construction and healthcare. VE is defined as “an analysis of the functions of a program, project, system, product, item of equipment, building, facility, service, or supply of an executive agency, performed by qualified agency or contractor personnel, directed at improving performance, reliability, quality, safety, and life cycle costs.” The Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act requires every federal agency to maintain a Value Engineering program. The Department of Defense (DoD) promotes contractor participation in the Value Engineering Program by providing informational material and assistance to contractors and establishing a knowledge-based community of practice, initially focused on Value Engineering Change Proposals (VECPs), to help practitioners share and learn from one another, face-to-face and virtually.

Government contractors receive a number of benefits for their participation in VE, including a share of the savings as additional unlimited profit that results from VE changes to contracts. Also, contractors may benefit from reduced costs, increased efficiencies, reduced overhead and improved competitive postures.

Value Engineering is an organized/systematic approach directed at analyzing the function of systems, equipment, facilities, services, and supplies for the purpose of achieving their essential functions at the lowest life-cycle cost consistent with required performance, reliability, quality, and safety. The implementation of the VE process on a problem typically increases some combination of performance, reliability, quality, safety, durability, effectiveness, or other desirable characteristics.

VE is not primarily centered on a specific category of the physical sciences; it incorporates available technologies, as well as the principles of economics and business management, into its procedures. When viewed as a management discipline, it uses the total resources available to an organization to achieve broad management objectives. Thus, VE is a systematic and creative approach for attaining a return on investment by improving what the product or service does in relation to the money spent on it.

With few exceptions, VE is mandatory in DoD contracts to encourage contractor participation and thereby realize the full benefits from cost reduction opportunities and innovations. To learn more, refer to <http://ve.ida.org/ve/documents/VE-ContractorsGuide060501.pdf> or contact your local PTAC of Alaska.

GSA Seeks Industry Comment on Contractor Performance Manual

Contributed by K. Anderson (anksa@uaa.alaska.edu)

The General Services Administration (GSA) has published a notice seeking industry comment for the publication “Contractor Performance in the Acquisition Process,” which provides guidance to agencies in addressing contractor performance data collection and usage. This publication was prepared by an interagency working group and can be accessed at <http://www.acquisition.gov> as can the Federal Register notice outlining this request for comments.

As a brief history, the enactment of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994, required contractor performance information as an evaluation factor for all procurements as part of the best value process. To accomplish this effort, agencies moved in different directions to share the performance data they collected individually. There was no concerted effort to share data government-wide, until 2002 when an Office of Management and Budget memorandum dictated that all Federal contractor past performance information would be centrally available on-line for use by all Federal agency contracting officials. As a result, the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS), a web-enabled, government-wide application, was born. And, the Past Performance Information Management System (PPIMS) and Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System (ACASS) were to be phased out, as well as other collection systems.

However, as with many things, it was determined that a lack of widespread use resulted in insufficient information in the PPIRS database. A review of how to streamline the collection of data, simplify the evaluations of vendors, and improve the value of the data in the database was requested and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy established a working group to re-visit the regulations, policies, and business considerations associated with contractor performance information. The end result is a comprehensive guide offering best practices to assist agencies in addressing and using contractor performance data.

In an effort to continue to solicit private sector input, this document has been distributed for public comment. This guide is designed to help agencies know their role in addressing and using contractor performance information. It addresses the types of performance information that exist, resources for finding the data, and standards to

employ. It discusses best use of performance data throughout the acquisition process, from the pre-award and planning phase, through source selection, and into contract evaluation.

The working group also reviewed Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and is proposing the following recommendations:

- The contractor performance information be removed from FAR, Part 36 and moved to FAR Subpart 42.15 to provide all contractor performance information in one location in the FAR.
- Remove the reference “past” from contractor performance information. Evaluating contractor performance is encouraged throughout the life of the contract, not just a completed contract. As such, it is useful both as an evaluation factor in awards and as a tool to encourage continuous outstanding performance.
- Remove duplications in the FAR guidance.
- Clarify the guidance relating to contractor performance information.
- Revisit and discuss the different feeder and retrieval systems for performance data.

The working group has prepared proposed language for the FAR. The proposed FAR rule reflecting the findings of this tasking is currently being processed by the FAR team and will be issued for comment at a later date.

Parties interested in submitting comment on the “Contractor Performance in the Acquisition Process” to the Integrated Acquisition Environment Division, GSA should do so on or before January 16, 2007. Comments can be identified by OCAO-2006-N01 through the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Information on submitting comments through other means can be found in the Federal Register notice.

It is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all.

—Laura Ingalls Wilder



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Local Professor Publishes RFID Book

Contributed by Carolyn Pratt (ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu)

Dr. Oliver Hedgepeth, chair of the Logistics Department at the University of Alaska Anchorage, published *RFID Metrics*, the first book to outline a detailed method for analyzing and deciding if RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) is right for an organization.

In today's hyper-competitive business climate, organizations are always under pressure to adapt to new technological trends or "hot" business process models. RFID is one such trend that promises to revolutionize logistical systems and provide total-lifecycle tracking of products. However, blindly adopting RFID technology without thoroughly considering its impact is just as dangerous as not adopting it at all.

Based on Dr. Hedgepeth's experience testing and implementing RFID technology in both industrial and military cases, *RFID Metrics: Decision Making Tools for Today's Supply Chains* explains how to evaluate the need for this technology. His book focuses on the problems RFID is meant to solve, if such problems exist in your organization, and the metrics you can use to make effec-

tive decisions. After establishing what RFID is and how it fits into the systems concept, the book discusses current RFID applications around the world, reveals key metrics for decision making as well as how to develop new metrics unique to RFID, demonstrates a war game for exploring RFID, and presents statistical methods for analyzing the data collected from the war games or gathered during implementation.

While other books focus on the nuts and bolts of the technology, *RFID Metrics* is the first book to outline a detailed method for analyzing and deciding if RFID is right for your organization. For information about locating this publication, contact Carolyn Pratt at 274-7232.

The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts.

—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus