

# Alaska Procurement Connection

A Monthly Newsletter From Your Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

## Watch for Continued Growth and Change in the Veteran-Owned Business Program!

Contributed by Mary H. Sheehan ([fmhs@uaf.edu](mailto:fmhs@uaf.edu))

PTAC is encouraging all veteran-owned businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses to register at VetBiz.gov. While we know this is another registration process, we advise you to register your business in order to be certain that you are fully utilizing your veteran-owned business status.

All new federal government contracting programs take a while to become fully implemented and to show results. The veteran-owned business program is starting to show results. In order to reap any potential benefits, you need to participate and be part of the process.

In order to register, simply go to the Center for Veterans Enterprise site at [www.vetbiz.gov](http://www.vetbiz.gov) and click on Vendor Information Pages.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a government contracting conference where Scott Denniston, the Director of the Center for Veterans Enterprise, spoke about future plans to help veteran-owned businesses market to the agencies.

Currently in the planning stages is for the VetBiz vendor database to be the *database of veteran-owned businesses who have gone through a legal verification process to determine their veteran ownership status*. Verified businesses will be annotated in the database and will receive the rights to display the verified logo in their marketing materials. Look for this proposed plan to be issued in The Federal Register sometime in early May for public comment.

The Center for Veterans Enterprise plans for this verification process to be relatively seamless. Most veterans can easily be verified through already existing databases where they have received some previous benefit as veterans. For those that cannot, they will likely be required to provide a copy of their DD214 (government discharge form from active duty service). Already posted at VetBiz.gov on the "Vendor Information Pages" is the following paragraph:

*The Vendor Information Pages Database is the only Federally-*

**Veteran & Service-Disabled Veteran Conference, Anchorage Marriott**  
May 16, 2008  
Call 561-5354 or 753-5576 for more information

**4th Annual National Veteran Small Business Conference & Expo**  
July 7 - July 10, 2008  
Las Vegas, NV  
[www.nationalveteransconference.com](http://www.nationalveteransconference.com)

May/June 2008

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Check out the PTAC Calendar of Events for Upcoming Opportunities!

[www.ptacalaska.org](http://www.ptacalaska.org)



### Anchorage

430 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 110  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 274-7232 or (800) 478-7232

### Fairbanks

604 Barnette Street, Suite 220  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
(907) 456-7232 or (800) 478-1701

[www.ptacalaska.org](http://www.ptacalaska.org)

### A Program of:



**University of Alaska  
Small Business  
Development Center**

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## Top Ten Cool Technologies

Contributed by Carolyn Pratt ([ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu))

Technology Review has recently released its latest list, "The 10 Emerging Technologies of 2008." The list contains lots of interesting new ideas and technologies that promise tremendous future advances. For example, wireless power, which transmits electricity via magnetic resonance, could mean the end of scrambling around the airport looking to plug in your laptop. Meanwhile, connectomics is a new means to mapping the brain that promises a better understanding of diseases such as autism and schizophrenia. Some of these emerging technologies are real right now, some are in prototype stages, and yet others require more research and development before they evolve into usable forms, but they're all new and expected to impact our future. The emerging technologies are:

**Graphene Transistors** - Graphene is a form of carbon consisting of layers merely one atom thick. Microchips built with graphene might run orders of magnitude faster than silicon-based circuits while generating far less heat and conducting it away more rapidly.

**Modeling Surprise** - Take massive amounts of historical data and apply machine learning in the form of Bayesian probability modeling to data about both past the experience and events in real time, and surprises can be made somewhat less surprising. That's the theory. But hey, Spamassassin works.

**Nano Radio** - Building tiny radios out of carbon nanotubes might have big impacts on everything from medical diagnostics to computer interfaces and personal communications devices.

**Offline Web Applications** — Combining the centralized data synchronicity of web-based "cloud computing" applications with localized data presence and processing holds promise to realise at least some of the long held IT visions of near real-time collaboration and truly distributed computing.

**Probabilistic Chips** — Building microchip circuits that get close rather than exactly correct results at least some of the time can save power and heat generation, potentially helping to extend Moore's Law in some

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## Unit Prices in Contract Line Items Cannot Be Released; Disregarding Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Contributed by Wesley Roberts Dalton ([fswrd1@uaf.edu](mailto:fswrd1@uaf.edu))

**“RULE: Line item prices of a current government contract may not be released to the general public.”**

According to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a Federal or Government Agency has to give a copy of a government contract, record, or any public document to any U.S. Citizen who asks for it. However, this is not true in all cases within the United States of America.

Some items within public records are confidential, such as Taxpayer Identification Numbers which can be on certain pages of government contracts. Therefore, those pages containing a U.S. Citizens TIN or any other commercial financial information cannot be released due to the rights of the individual(s). Specifically, this action is exercised when concerning a contractor's prices for various line items. But why?

Several years ago, the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) with Orenda Aerospace Corp. had a contract with the U.S. Air Force to repair and maintain turbojet engines. A copy of this contract was requested through the FOIA by CCC's competitor, Sabreliner. CCC immediately tried to prevent the release of its historical line item prices within the requested contract, but the Air force decided to release the information. CCC filed a "reverse FOIA" claiming that having its line items revealed to the public would give CCC's competitors overall advantage when re-bidding that particular contract. The Air Force refuted that revealing the line items would not matter because the Air Force would take into consideration the high cost of replacing CCC for the next contract, therefore resulting favorably for CCC.

The appeals court decision sided with CCC because there were no transaction costs quantified if a new contractor was switched from CCC to a new contractor, therefore not providing any facts and figures to prove its case. This decision is great for those who wish to keep its competitors somewhat in the dark, but the taxpayer does not see the exact amounts paid for products and services on behalf of the United States.

Summarily, all line items within any government contract cannot be acquired through the FOIA for any reasons because doing so would cause "substantial competitive harm."

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controlled database in which a legal verification process is used to determine service-disabled or veteran status of a small business. All companies participating in the Veterans First program under PL 109-461 are required to submit evidence of ownership/control and veteran status before being awarded a VA contract under the set-aside authority.

Stay tuned and watch the Federal Register and the PTAC website for continued updates on the veteran-owned business program.

## **New GSA Plan to help SDVOSBs**

*Contributed by Alison Brunstetter ([anamb1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:anamb1@uaa.alaska.edu))*

In a recent article published in the Federal Acquisition Report, the General Services Administration (GSA) announced a new initiative on March 3 to maximize the amount of contract dollars it will award to service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns. Named after one of the military's highest honors, the Twenty-One Gun Salute, the plan promises to allocate at least 3% of GSA contract dollars to SDVOSBs in 2008.

"Reaching out to service-disabled veterans is the right thing to do and provides government with resourceful men and women who have honed on the battlefield the skills that are elements of business success, discipline, and cooperation," GSA Administrator Lurita Doan said of the initiative.

According to the article, the Twenty-One Gun Salute plans to raise awareness among GSA buyers and contracting officers, identify SDVOSBs providing high-demand products or services, and help those businesses find their markets. GSA said it will work closely with the Veterans Corporation, a federally-chartered organization created by the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-50) to provide resources to veterans such as capital, surety bonding, and education.

GSA establishes long-term government-wide contracts that allow customers to acquire a vast array of supplies (products) and services directly from commercial suppliers. ***To become a GSA Schedule contractor, a vendor must first submit an offer in response to the applicable GSA Schedule solicitation.*** For more information about GSA Schedules and the Twenty-One Gun Salute initiative, go to [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) or contact your local GSA Alaska Regional Office at 907-271-3942.

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applications where precision isn't of paramount importance such as scientific computer modeling and multimedia processing.

**Reality Mining** - Collecting and analysing data generated during ordinary activities can help map and understand social networks and relationships, adding new tools people can use in their lives and enabling new insights.

**Wireless Power** - Using electromagnetic resonance, devices can be powered or their batteries recharged simply by being in proximity to power sources.

**Atomic Magnetometers** - Building tiny magnetic field sensors that could revolutionise magnetic resonance imaging in medicine.

**Cellulolytic Enzymes** - Designing better protein structures for extracting biofuels from cellulose.

**Connectonomics** - Tracing neural connection paths to advance knowledge about brain development and disease.

To view the complete list and for a more in depth review of each technology visit [www.technologyreview.com](http://www.technologyreview.com)

## **Alaska's Construction Spending: 2008 Forecast**

*Contributed by Carolyn Pratt ([ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu))*

Construction spending in Alaska will total about \$7 billion in 2008, down 2% from 2007, according to the new construction spending forecast by Scott Goldsmith and Mary Killorin of UAA's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). The forecast is prepared annually for the Construction Industry Progress Fund and the Associated General Contractors of Alaska. Other findings include:

*At \$4.6 billion, spending by private industry will make up 66% of total 2008 construction spending. Private-industry spending is up 2% from last year, with projected growth in the oil and gas, mining, utilities, and other basic sectors.*

*Public agencies are expected to spend \$2.4 billion, or 34% of total construction spending.*

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*That's a drop of 8% from 2007, mostly because the federal government will spend less for military construction in Alaska this year. Construction spending by state and local governments is expected to increase about 12%.*

*The oil and gas industry will spend the most—about \$2.9 billion, or 5% more than in 2007. That spending alone accounts for \$4 of every \$10 in construction spending. Most spending will be on the North Slope, but something in the range of 10% will be in Cook Inlet.*

*Residential construction spending is expected to drop 35% in 2008. But unlike in many parts of the U.S., the drop is not due to problems associated with the sub-prime mortgage market. It's mostly because housing prices in Alaska have been rising faster than incomes—so the supply of houses exceeds the demand. That's a temporary imbalance, because Alaska's housing market is basically sound. Housing construction will slow down until demand can absorb the excess supply that accumulated in 2007.*

Copies of the forecast are available online from ISER and the Associated General Contractors ([www.agcak.org](http://www.agcak.org)). Hard copies are also available from Associated General Contractors; call 907-561-5354.

**Save the Date!**

**Alaska 8(a) Association 10th Annual Spring Conference**

May 21 - 22, 2008, 8AM - 5PM

Sheraton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska

For information, please contact Jessica Morales at (907) 264-6724 or email at

[jessicamorales@gci.net](mailto:jessicamorales@gci.net).

*“The House voted overwhelmingly to require agencies to use plain language in public reports, letters, and documents. The bill would leave it up to each agency to define ‘plain language.’”*

[www.setasidealert.com](http://www.setasidealert.com)