

# Alaska Procurement Connection

A Monthly Newsletter From Your Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

## Farewell... For Now

*It has been an honor serving you as the Alaska PTAC Program Director and it is with great sadness I send my farewell. Over the past four years we have seen many changes within the Alaska PTAC Program and with government contracting in general. ProNet became the Dynamic Small Business Search and was merged with CCR. NAICS codes changed twice. Regulatory flexibility, paperwork reduction, and streamlining government became the relevant buzzwords. Within the Alaska PTAC we moved to an electronic survey reporting system, revamped our website and newsletter, and upgraded our client database twice. We've also provided more outreach and counseling than in the history of the Alaska PTAC and received record reporting for contract awards and jobs creation —\$1.3 billion in prime contract awards and 33,000 jobs created or retained for the last four years. Although the future appears to be bringing additional changes within the Alaska Small Business Development Center and ultimately the Alaska PTAC Program, I am confident one thing will remain constant—the exceptional dedication and professionalism of the Alaska PTAC staff. Never has there been such an outstanding quality of character and I am grateful at having been a part of such an awesome team. Many thanks to all of you for the opportunity to contribute over the years to something extraordinary that has made such a positive impact on the Alaskan economy and the businesses that keep it going. Until our paths cross again, best of luck! —Katherine*

## Regulatory Review and Reform—It's up to You

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

It's not often you get to tell the government what you think about their regulations, but the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy is inviting you to do just that. Currently, the Office of Advocacy is seeking comment on federal regulations that are in need of review or reform through a public input process that ends December 31, 2007.

The Office of Advocacy's new small business Regulatory Review and Reform (r3) initiative addresses many of the issues raised in a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, Reexamining Regulations: Opportunities Exist to Improve Effectiveness and Transparency of Retrospective Reviews. The report spotlighted implementation of section 610 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), which mandates that agencies periodically examine their existing regulations to measure changing impacts on small business. The GAO found that agency implementation of section 610 review often suffers from a lack of clear standards, insufficient public participation and comment, and inadequate communication to stakeholders.

Continued on page 3

November 2007

## On the Inside

News Flash.....	2
New Rules at the USPTO .....	2
Early Exchanges between the Federal Govt and Industry .....	3
FedBizOpps vs. PTAC's Bidmatch.....	3
Final Rule on Small Business Credit for Subcontracts to ANC's .....	4
Web Based Ethics Course for Government Contractors .....	4

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

613 Cushman Street, Suite 209  
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



Contributed by Megan Luna (anmcl1@uaa.alaska.edu)

## Feedback Sought for Future FPDS Changes

The Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) is seeking suggestions for improvement to its current system. Their website can be found at <https://www.fpds.gov/>. These changes will be considered for a new release of FPDS in 2009. If you have feedback on improving FPDS, go to [http://www.acquisition.gov/fpds\\_feedback.cfm](http://www.acquisition.gov/fpds_feedback.cfm). There you will be asked to submit your e-mail address, recommended change and what need you feel it will meet.

## Web Portal Offers Access to Government Contract Data

A new website offers simplified search methods for accessing details on individual government-awarded contracts and grants. The site, <http://www.ffata.org>, was created by Global Computer Enterprises Inc., the same contractor that operates the government's official Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation. It is an independent site and it not affiliated with any government agency.

The website includes a keyword search, as well as the ability to sort and narrow down search results. According to the website, contract information is updated the next working day after it is entered into FPDS-NG, and grant information is updated on a quarterly basis. No registration is required.

## DLA's Internet Bid Board System

Visit <https://www.dibbs.bsm.dla.mil> to check out the Defense Logistic Agency (DLA) Internet Bid Board System (DIBBS). It allows users to securely search for, view and respond to Request for Quotes (RFQs) for DLA items of supply online. Users can also search for and view Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Invitation for Bids (IFB) for DLA related procurements.

In order to use the secure portions of the website, users must register within the system. All users must first be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR). This can be done at <http://www.ccr.gov>. Then users must register on the DIBBS website. When users go to register, some items will be pre-filled for them, based on their CCR information. If you need assistance registering in the DIBBS system, contact your local PTAC office for help.

## New Rules at the USPTO

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

New rules at the US Patent and Trademark Office take place November 1 and are expected to make the patent examination process more effective and efficient. The new rules have been modified, relative to the rules that were originally proposed early last year, in response to the extensive comments the USPTO received from the public. Under the new rules, applicants may file two new continuing applications and one request for continued examination as a matter of right.

Also, under the new rules, each application may contain up to 25 claims, with no more than five of them independent claims, without any additional effort on the part of the applicant. Beyond these thresholds, however, the new rules require applicants to show why an additional continuation is necessary or to provide supplementary information relevant to the claimed invention to present additional claims.

Jon Dudas, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office says, "Higher quality applications result in a more effective examination. These rules focus examination and will bring closure to the process more quickly, while ensuring quality and maintaining the right balance between flexibility for applicants and the rights of the public. The U.S. patent system plays a tremendous role in motivating innovation, and these changes to examining patent applications will help ensure that America remains on the leading edge in the knowledge driven global economy."

Placing conditional boundaries on a previously unbounded process provides for more certainty and clarity in the patent process. The result is that application quality will be improved and piecemeal or protracted examination will be avoided, enhancing the quality and timeliness of both the examination process and issued patents.

Contact TREND if you have questions or need information about the patent application process at 907-274-7232 or e-mail to [ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu). The new rules are available in the Federal Register or read about implications of the new rules at <http://www.uspto.gov/main/homepagenews/bak2007aug20.htm>.

## *Continued from page 1*

Stakeholders interested in recommending reform of a current rule or regulatory program that may be ineffective, duplicative, or out of date, should provide the Office of Advocacy with a description of the current rule and the reasons why the rule or program should be reformed. Stakeholders also need to describe their recommended reform. After Advocacy receives and reviews a recommendation for reform, Advocacy staff will work with the stakeholder to develop sufficient information to move forward. Initial recommendations for reform are due by December 31, 2007. For additional information, access: <http://www.sba.gov/advo/r3/>

## **FedBizOpps vs. PTAC's Bidmatch**

Contributed by Wesley Dalton (fswrd@uaf.edu)

Finding government contracting opportunities is not an easy task. Fortunately, the Internet can be one of the best tools for locating work. The challenge becomes figuring out which sites or programs to access.

The first place to look for federal contracting opportunities is the Federal Business Opportunity website at <http://www.fbo.gov>, which is free and open to the public. This site is essential for finding federal contracting opportunities valued at over \$25,000. This site can be searched for compatible opportunities using North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes, agency, or keyword. Users can also subscribe to an e-mail notification service, however, this does have a limited search criteria and receiving all of those notifications could be overwhelming. Bidmatch services provided through your nearest PTAC center can help with this process.

Bidmatch filters through all electronically posted federal solicitations as well as state and local government solicitations to find matches that fit the search criteria defined in your unique profile. This profile is based primarily on NAICS codes and keywords for your industry as well as locations in which you are looking for work. Once "matches" are selected, they are sent directly to your business e-mail for review.

Bidmatch services provided through the Alaska PTAC program can be a valuable tool for government contractors. For best results, it is recommended that both FedBizOpps and bidmatch services be used for maximum contracting opportunity success. For more information about PTAC's services, access our website at <http://www.ptacalaska.org>.

## **Early Exchanges Between the Federal Govt and Industry**

Contributed by A. Brunstetter (anamb1@uaa.alaska.edu)

As a contractor, you should know that the federal government is encouraged to promote early exchanges of information about future acquisitions. The purpose of exchanging information is to improve the industry's understanding of government requirements and the government's understanding of industry capabilities. Such exchanges also enhance the government's ability to obtain quality supplies and services at reasonable prices and increase efficiency in proposal preparation, evaluation, negotiation, and contract award.

Some techniques the government may use to promote early exchanges of information are public hearings and industry or small business conferences. The government uses industry or small business conferences to identify the requirements, and when unsure of the approach that would provide the best value. The government also seeks industry's input relative to any obsolete or unnecessary requirements that may be eliminated. One last purpose for these conferences is to test industry capabilities to perform the requirement. One common type of exchange is the RFI, or Request for Information. The government uses this method when the potential offeror is not quite to the RFP stage; the RFI may be used as part of the market research. Information on price, delivery, or other market conditions or capabilities is sought by the Federal government for early planning purposes. Remember, though, RFIs are not offers and cannot be accepted by the government to form a binding contract.

Something to remember concerning early exchanges is that the Contracting Officer becomes the focal point of any exchange with potential offerors after release of the solicitation. Also, the government needs specific information for the preparation of a proposal and it must be made available to all potential offerors to avoid an unfair competitive edge. This does not, however, prevent them from providing information to offerors on an individual, one-on-one basis. For more information regarding this topic, contact your local PTAC office.



430 West 7th Avenue, Suite 110  
Anchorage, AK 99501

---

## Final Rule on Small Business Credit for Subcontracts to ANC's

Contributed by Mary H. Sheehan (fnmhs@uaf.edu)

A final rule was recently published in the Federal Register, Vol. 72, No. 159 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>) which adds to the ever broadening window of rulings that allow Alaskan Native Corporation (ANCs) and Indian tribes to be counted as small, regardless of their size status, for goaling on government contracts. The effective date of the change was September 17, 2007. This final rule amended the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) to implement section 702 of the Emergency Supplemental Act, 2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act for Further Recovery From and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States. The Federal Register announcement includes the 28 comments that were received in response to the proposed rule. It also includes the definition of Alaska Native Corporation (ANC) as well as the definition of Indian Tribe. Additionally, to be counted as small for subcontracting purposes the ANC or Indian Tribe is not required to be certified SDB or 8(a) by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

## Web Based Ethics Course for Government Contractors

Contributed by Mary H. Sheehan (fnmhs@uaf.edu)

Government contractors can sometimes find themselves in tenuous situations when working on a daily basis with government employees on government installations. There is help and guidance available for government contractors. The Office of Government Ethics (<http://www.usoge.gov>) has recently posted a free online course titled "Interacting with Government Employees for Contractors." The course is an interactive web-based training module that is designed as an introduction to some common ethics issues that contractors may encounter when working with Government employees. The course addresses topics such as: conflicts of interest; gifts that government employees may accept from contractors; government employees seeking work as an employee of a contractor; post-government employment restrictions; and contractor employees leaving the private sector to enter government service. The course may be found at the link below.

— [http://www.usoge.gov/pages/comp\\_web\\_trng/cwt\\_modules/ogegovctr\\_wbt\\_07/10.html](http://www.usoge.gov/pages/comp_web_trng/cwt_modules/ogegovctr_wbt_07/10.html)