Small Business Success Story

NASA's Marshall Center Receives Small Business Administrator's Cup Award

Rick Smith
Marshall Space Flight Center

NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center was honored July 11 when NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, visiting from Washington, presented center leaders with the Small Business Administrator's Cup—an agency award for managing the most effective small business program.

It is the third time in five years Marshall has earned the prize. The award honors innovative practices that promote small business participation in a variety of NASA initiatives, and recognizes significant contributions to the agency's small business programs by the winning center's senior management, procurement office and program and technical personnel.

“Small business is essential to NASA’s mission, and the Marshall Center has demonstrated excellence and commitment in this crucial area,” Bolden said. “I’m proud of the hard-working Marshall employees who continue to make the center’s small business program a critical part of NASA's future.”

NASA's Office of Small Business Programs sponsors the award, which Marshall previously won for its work in fiscal years 2008 and 2010. Glenn Delgado, associate administrator of NASA's Office of Small Business Programs in Washington, joined Bolden to present the latest award to Marshall Center Associate Director Robin Henderson.

“I am incredibly proud to see Marshall’s small business team recognized once again with this prestigious award,” Henderson said. “This team remains tirelessly dedicated to our small business partners, and to the mutually beneficial relationships that strengthen us all and help NASA accomplish the work of the nation.”

Marshall small business specialist David Brock credited the center’s winning program to a number of factors, including strong support from center management and two on-site organizations: the Marshall Prime Contractor Supplier Council, which includes representatives of 50 large businesses; and the Marshall Small Business Executive Leadership Team, comprised of representatives of 30 small businesses. Most participate in the Marshall Small Business Alliance. Founded in 2007, the alliance is a vital resource for thousands of small businesses, serving as a regional conduit to help them pursue NASA procurement and subcontracting opportunities.

MISSION STATEMENT
To advise the Administrator on all matters related to small business, to promote the development and management of NASA programs that assist all categories of small business, to develop small businesses in high-tech areas that include technology transfer and commercialization of technology, and to provide small businesses maximum practicable opportunities to participate in NASA prime contracts and subcontracts.

VISION STATEMENT
The vision of the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) at NASA Headquarters is to promote and integrate all small businesses into the competitive base of contractors that pioneer the future of space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research.
Small Business Success Story (Continued)

Marshall’s large business prime contractors also aid in that pursuit, Brock said. In fiscal year 2012, those large prime contractors helped provide approximately $250 million in total subcontracting awards to small businesses.

“The success achieved over the past several fiscal years by the Marshall Center Small Business Program is a result of a total team effort,” Brock said. “Participation by our senior managers at Marshall Small Business Alliance meetings and regional business forums, and outstanding support by Marshall’s acquisition, technical and contractor communities have helped lay a solid foundation on which to grow and expand our programs.”

Learn more about doing business with the Marshall Center by visiting the following link: http://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/about/business.html.

Smith, an Analytical Services, Inc., employee, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications. Reprinted with permission.

SBS Spotlight

Tell us a little about your background: where you grew up, life experiences, and how you got into civil service.

I grew up in Bennettsville, SC. I was raised by a single mother, and there are no words that can explain the exceptional way she instilled life values in me. As a teen, I was always into sports, playing drums, and spending time with my grandfather. I learned a lot about NASA because my cousin would attend space camp and come back home letting everyone know what he had learned and saw. I also recall my mom, aunts, uncles, and cousins all gathering around the TV to watch the Shuttle launch. Who would have known that after college and a great Air Force career I would be working for such a prestigious Government agency? After college, I joined the United States Air Force, and during my second year there I realized that I needed to make a life plan. The Air Force offers so many great opportunities to active duty members, and I knew I had to take advantage of some of those. I decided to become an Air Force Recruiter because my bachelor of arts was in marketing. While I was performing this special duty I completed my Community College of the Air Force degree in human resources. Also during this time I met my best friend (who I like to call my angel) and started my family. Now that I had an established plan in the works, I completed my Air Force Career (10 years) and also completed my master’s in business administration. As soon as I left active duty I was hired by the Air Force as a civilian contracting specialist. After 2 successful years as a civilian in the Air Force doing cradle-to-the-grave contracting, NASA offered me a position and I brought my talents to NASA. Once I came on board with the best Government agency, I knew the sky was the limit. “Go NASA Go!”

What made you want to become a Small Business Specialist?

During my Air Force career as a contracting officer I worked with the small business office and really enjoyed issuing awards to small businesses. Every year, I looked forward to the small business industry day. This was where contracting officers would meet face to face with 100+ small businesses for about 15 minutes each and listen to what they had to offer. I really enjoyed this opportunity because it gave real interaction with the company instead of a phone call or e-mail. When NASA asked me to be the Small Business Specialist for the NASA Management Office I was very happy to accept the position. It is a great feeling knowing that you are helping the Nation grow its economy by awarding NASA work to small businesses. It’s even a greater feeling knowing I helped NASA receive an “A” on its SBA Procurement Scorecard. “Go NASA Go!”

What is your favorite part of being a Small Business Specialist?

My favorite part of being a Small Business Specialist is helping small businesses grow with NASA. There is no better feeling than seeing a small business awarded a contract with NASA. Furthermore, being the first person a small business contacts is rewarding to me because I get to lead that small business into opportunities and growth. I really believe in first impressions, and that’s why when I meet a small business for the first time I dress accordingly, provide answers for all their questions, and send them away with smiles on their faces knowing that doing business with NASA is very obtainable. I also really like the outreach events. During these events you get to meet one on one with small businesses and listen to them explain their company’s capabilities and everything they can offer NASA. This is a “wow” moment for me to see such innovations and true hard work provided by small businesses. “Go NASA Go!”

In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing small business this year or in the future?

In my opinion, the biggest issue facing small business is Federal budget cuts. These budget cuts are actually affecting us all. On the small business side, these cuts are taking away work for small businesses and preventing the creation of new opportunities. On the Government side, these cuts are taking away from training and development and reducing the number of small business industry days. Having that face-to-face contact is a necessity. The budget cuts are affecting us all, but with the great team we have here at NASA, we will be able to overcome these challenges and continue to be the best small business program in the Federal Government. “Go NASA Go!”
As the new year begins, we must remain focused on providing as many opportunities as possible for small businesses. Bill McNally, Assistant Administrator for Procurement and Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, and I recently signed out a joint letter reminding the NASA acquisition community about the criticality of small business contracting. This letter addressed the topics of conducting robust market research, maximizing the use of existing contracts, highlighting the importance of small business set-asides at the order level, and promoting the growth of women-owned small businesses. It currently appears that NASA should achieve its negotiated small business goal; however, NASA will again fall short of achieving the statutory goals for Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones), Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSBs), and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). In an effort to achieve these goals in the future, NASA developed a Small Business Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2014 and 2015. Administrator Charles F. Bolden recently signed out the plan, which includes the following three initiatives:

1. Inreach to the NASA Community: Strengthen small business awareness and opportunities through stakeholder advocacy, training, and participation through existing resources.
2. Outreach and Social Media: Enhance small business awareness of NASA mission requirements through traditional and non-traditional outreach methodologies.

Each initiative contains several objectives that outline accomplishment goals and requirements for measurability, affordability, and achievability.

On July 11, 2013, I had the privilege to accompany Administrator Bolden to Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) to present the Center with the fiscal year 2012 Small Business Administrator’s Cup Award. I would again like to congratulate everyone at MSFC for their support of the small business program, especially the Center’s senior management: Center Director Patrick Scheuermann, Deputy Center Director Teresa Vanhooser, Associate Director Robin Henderson, and Director of Procurement Kim Whitson. I would also like to recognize David Brock, the MSFC Small Business Specialist and two-time NASA Small Business Specialist of the Year award winner, for the outstanding program he has in place. MSFC has received the Small Business Administrator’s Cup Award in 3 of the 5 years the award has been presented. This is a testament to the management and acquisition and contractor communities at the Center.

I would also like to recognize Langley Research Center (LaRC) for being the runner-up for the Small Business Administrator’s Cup Award and for their management’s support of the small business program. I also recognize Randy Manning, the current Small Business Specialist of the Year, as well as the other Centers for their outstanding support of the program.

I want to thank the entire team at Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) for the outstanding job at the SDVOSB outreach event held in August. I truly hope that, as a result of the GSFC SDVOSB Industry Day and the other outreach events conducted this year, the Agency will be able to increase its awards to each of the prime socioeconomic categories that we have not been able to achieve in the past few years.
Small Business Team Achievement at NASA!

Truphelia Parker
Program Specialist, NASA Office of Small Business Programs

The NASA 2012 Agency Honor Awards were presented at Headquarters on Thursday, July 18, 2013, in the James E. Webb Memorial Auditorium. During the awards ceremony two individuals and one team from the Agency’s small business community were recognized.

NASA OSBP Associate Administrator Glenn A. Delgado was presented with the Exceptional Service Medal for sustained performance that includes multiple contributions to NASA projects, programs, or initiatives. Most notably, under Delgado’s leadership, the Agency’s congressional small business scorecard grade has gone from an “F” in fiscal year 2006 to an “A” in fiscal year 2012!

The Exceptional Achievement Medal was awarded to OSBP Program Manager Tabisa T. Kalisa for significant specific achievement or substantial improvement in operations, efficiency, service, financial savings, science, or technology that contributes to the mission of NASA. Specifically, Tepfer was recognized at the awards ceremony for her distinguished performance in advocating and revamping the Office of Small Business Programs’ collateral outreach products in 2012, though she was unable to attend the event in person.

Michelle Stracener received an Exceptional Achievement Medal for her role as the Small Business Specialist at Stennis Space Center (SSC). Between fiscal years 2009 and 2011, the total contract dollars awarded to small businesses increased by 14.4 percent. In fiscal year 2010, SSC exceeded its goals in every small business category for the first time, and SSC won the Administrator’s Cup for having the best Small Business Program in the Agency for fiscal year 2011.

The NASA Acquisition Forecast Team received a Group Achievement Award for outstanding performance in redesigning the NASA Acquisition Forecast Web site in 2012. The Associate Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was so impressed with the consolidated forecast that in December 2012 he directed the entire Government to provide a standardized Acquisition Forecast for all requirements over $150,000. The award was accepted by David B. Grove, Program Manager in NASA OSBP.

Small businesses have generated 65% of net new jobs over the past 17 years.
Coaching could be the next evolution for your small business. Recently, I attended the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) in Charlottesville, VA. Among the course criteria was a segment on coaching. Coaching is defined as teaching, training, or developing an individual or organization to achieve a specific private or stated goal. There are many ways to coach, but the way FEI taught coaching was to ask open-ended questions that would challenge the coachee to find answers based on their own personal knowledge, values, preferences, and perspective.

NASA has assisted small businesses with a variety of methods. The NASA Small Business Specialist will answer questions via a conference booth or a telephone call. We can set up capability briefs to provide a longer forum of up to 30 minutes. NASA urges small businesses to get advice from Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) and Small Business Development Centers.

On a personal level, most people could use a mentor or sounding board to bounce ideas off. NASA even has a Mentor-Protégé Program to partner small businesses with large businesses. The mentors are great at providing training and suggesting solutions to known problems. The problem with mentors is that they do not know the business as well as the owner of the small business and they sometimes jump to solutions based on personal experience, values, preferences, and perspective. The benefit of coaching is that a well-trained coach will not jump to a quick solution but will instead draw out the solution from the coachee.

The coach should not ask “yes or no” questions but rather questions that require the individual to do complex or critical thinking. The real skill in coaching is not necessarily in asking the first question but in asking the follow-up questions. Typical first questions are: Where do you see your business in 5 years? What are the strengths and challenges of your business? These questions require thought and bring in the experience and business perspective of the coachee. The standard follow-up question is, How are you going to do this? These are all very generic questions, and a trained coach should be much more focused. This type of coaching is very time consuming and you should not expect it to be completed in a day.

Coaching is not mentoring. Mentoring connotes a senior-to-junior or experience-to-inexperience relationship. Coaching takes this to a new level and requires more time to develop the dialogue. I know of no Government agency that currently provides coaching, but if you are interested in business coaching there are several organizations that can help. The Professional Business Coach Alliance, the International Coach Federation, the International Coaching Council, and the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches provide a membership-based association for business coaching professionals.
NASA Mentor-Protégé Program Update

Christopher Gray
Program Analyst (Contractor)
NASA Office of Small Business Programs

There have been three new agreements approved under the NASA Mentor-Protégé program this summer. At Marshall Space Flight Center, for 9 months, ATK will be mentoring Florida A&M University (FAMU), a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). ATK will provide Six Sigma training, value stream mapping, individual development, and hardware processing services. The training will provide valuable information to aid in developing fabrication process flows for the Space Launch System (SLS) Core Stage Attach Rings for ATK as required by NASA.

Glenn Research Center submitted and approved their first two mentor-protégé agreements. The first is between Honeywell Technology Solutions Inc. (HTSI) and Alphaport, Inc., a woman-owned, Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) small business. HTSI will provide developmental assistance for 36 months, primarily by increasing Alphaport’s

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NASA Ames Research Center Highlight

South Bay EDC, Inc.

AnJennette Contreras-Rodriguez
Contracting Officer, NASA Ames Research Center

South Bay EDC, Inc., is a small minority-owned business located in Arizona. South Bay EDC was founded in 1993 in San Diego, CA, as South Bay Electric Design and Construction and focused on electrical contracting and projects. In 1998, South Bay Electric Design and Construction formally changed its name to South Bay EDC, Inc., and changed the focus of its business from electrical contracting to general contracting and project management.

South Bay EDC was admitted into the SBA 8(a) Small Disadvantaged Business (SBD) program in 1997 and graduated from the program in 2006. During this time, South Bay EDC was able to find a niche performing technically challenging construction projects, especially in remote locations. South Bay EDC has been able to parlay the experience gained in the 8(a) program into becoming a successful Government contractor. Over the course of working with clients such as the Navy, the Air Force, the Army Corps of Engineers, NASA, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the General Services Administration, and many other Federal agencies, South Bay has successfully completed well over $150 million in contracts with numerous awards and zero lost-time accidents.

NASA Rated One of the Best Places To Work in 2012

Ranked First Among Large Federal Agencies

NASA was ranked one of the “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” by the Partnership for Public Service for 2012.

Designed to help a broad audience of Government leaders, employees, and job seekers, the “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” rankings draw on responses from nearly 700,000 civil servants to produce a detailed view of employee satisfaction and commitment across 362 Federal agencies and subcomponents.

The Partnership for Public Service uses data from the Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (http://www.fedview.opm.gov) to rank agencies and their subcomponents according to a “Best Places to Work” index score.

The Partnership for Public Service (http://ourpublicservice.org) works to revitalize the Federal Government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way Government works.

Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

President Obama established the President’s Advisory Commission to work with all Federal agencies to improve the health, education, and economic status of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. To learn more about the initiative, please visit http://www.whitehouse.gov/aapi.

In support of the initiative, OSBP is now providing the Small Business Program Guide in the following languages: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Spanish. To download these files, visit http://www.osbp.nasa.gov.

SSC Management shows its support of small businesses at the Stennis Industry Day held on February 28, 2013. Pictured are Rob Harris, Procurement Officer; Rob Watts, Small Business Specialist, NSSC; Michelle Stracener, Small Business Specialist; Marina Benigno, Assistant to the Director; Jo Ann Larson, Manager, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity; Jim Huk, Deputy Procurement Officer; and Ken Human, Associate Director.
In fiscal year 2009, Ames Research Center awarded an approximately $10 million design build contract to South Bay EDC to improve the electrical supply reliability of Ames’s Advanced Supercomputing Facility, Building N258. The project is a prototype Rotating Uninterrupted Power System (RUPS) operating at 14,200 volts and producing 6 megawatts of power for Building N258. South Bay EDC put together a design team consisting of Hitec Power Systems, Engineering Partners, Inc., and other consulting engineers all in concert with the in-house architectural engineer. South Bay EDC worked closely with NASA’s Contracting Office and project engineers to address several challenging technical and security-sensitive issues related to the supercomputing facility. While RUPS systems are not new, this project is the first operating at such high (14.2 KV) voltages and addressing all of the frequency and control issues required to service the supercomputer and the entire supporting infrastructure. This project is highly technical, and the design team, in cooperation with NASA’s project team, had to address several significant application issues as the design progressed. In addition to the technically stringent requirements of this project, South Bay EDC has worked closely with NASA’s staff to successfully accommodate multiple safety and environmental requirements.

The quality of South Bay EDC’s personnel has been a significant factor in the success of this project. They work very closely with the author of this article, AnJennette Contreras-Rodriguez, Contracting Officer; A.C. Mosher, Contracting Officer’s Representative; Henry Chung, project manager; and Mark Tang, NASA Advanced Supercomputing (NAS) facility manager, to fully meet the project’s requirements and are always available to consult with NASA staff to discuss any technical issues.

For more information on South Bay EDC, visit http://www.southbayedc.com.
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NASA Small Business Policy Update

Caps Lifted; NFs Changing

Craig W. Bowers
Procurement Analyst

Before I discuss what’s new in the policy area I want to pass along my congratulations to the Office of Small Business Programs, the NASA Small Business Specialists, and the NASA contracting community for their achievement of an “A” program rating from the SBA. NASA has a challenging small business utilization mission with a large percentage of high-complexity work and numerous large operations and management (O&M) contracts. Yet, with effective leadership and teamwork, it is achievable. Earning the top rating during this period of heightened small business awareness will cement NASA’s reputation as a leader in Federal small business utilization for years to come.

It’s official: Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 05-67 was issued on June 21, 2013, removing the caps on the size of Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) and Woman-Owned Small Business set-asides. Now contracting officers may set aside actions for EDWOSBs and WOSBs whenever the requirements fall in the designated North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code and two or more qualifying EDWOSBs or WOSBs are available, without regard to the anticipated value. NASA is working hard to improve its overall performance in Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business, Historically Underutilized Business Zone, and WOSB utilization, and this change adds one more tool to assist us in getting there.

At the most recent Small Business Specialist quarterly meeting, a discussion was held concerning the NASA Form (NF) 1787 process. We discussed when it is necessary and who needs to participate. NF 1787 is the official method that contracting officers use to coordinate their small business utilization plans with the Center SBS and the assigned SBA Procurement Center Representative (PCR). Small business program requirements placed on a contracting officer are extensive and growing. NF 1787 serves as a reminder of the different programs available, what is to be considered, and the record of the decision and concurrence by the SBS and PCR. A few complaints have been received from the field regarding the process. The complaints seem targeted to small business considerations rather than the actual form and process. Our SBS community overwhelming has developed close relationships with the assigned PCR. When timelines are tight, talk to the SBS to request an expedited review with the office and the PCR. Centers can also consider exempting certain types of actions from PCR review with the concurrence of the SBS and PCR.

The long-awaited Part 1819 rewrite is making its way through the rulemaking process. There are two items that you can take action on now. First, as discussed earlier, if the SBS and PCR are agreeable, you can exempt certain NF 1787 PCR reviews. The second item affects weighting in small business subcontracting award fee plans. Currently, significant weight should be no greater than 15 percent. In the NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) rewrite, that amount is set at 10 percent. Since the new approach falls within the current guidance, you can start using the 10 percent weighting now.

Social Media

The NASA Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) has a new Facebook page! Why? NASA OSBP would like the public to have instant access to small business information. Whether it is news that impacts the small business community, outreach and matchmaking events, or procurement opportunities— we want to simplify the process.

Please take a moment to like us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/NASASmallBusiness

Follow us on Twitter at http://twitter.com/NASA_OSBP

Also, tune in to Glenn’s Blog at http://nasasbp.blogspot.com/

It will only take a few minutes of your time, and we would love to hear from you!
**U.S. SBA Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs)**

Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs) increase the small business share of Federal procurement awards by initiating small business set-asides, reserving procurements for competition among small business firms, providing small business sources to Federal buying activities, and counseling small firms. In addition, PCRs advocate for the breakout of items for full and open competition to effect savings to the Federal Government. For additional information, visit [http://www.sba.gov/content/government-contracting-field-staff-directory](http://www.sba.gov/content/government-contracting-field-staff-directory).

**OSBP Web Site**

The NASA OSBP Web site helps individuals and companies to navigate small business policies, procedures, and best practices at NASA.

The purpose of the Web site [http://www.osbp.nasa.gov](http://www.osbp.nasa.gov) is to share the vision of the Small Business Program at NASA, as well as provide pertinent information on how to do business with NASA.