

## WM2014 Conference Panel Report

### **PANEL SESSION 52A: Addressing the Small Business Barriers in Contracting with the US DOE**

**Co-Chairs:** **Jim Fiore**, *Fiore Consulting*  
**John Coffman**, *ReNuke Services, Inc.*

**Panel Reporter:** **Vanessa Vanover Hatfield**, *E2 Consulting Engineers, Inc.*

#### **Panelists:**

1. **John Hale III**, *Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, US DOE*
2. **Jack Surash**, *Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Project Management, US DOE*
3. **John Evett**, *Small Business Program Manager, Office of Environmental Management, US DOE*
4. **Greg Gonzales**, *Small Business Program Manager, NNSA, Albuquerque Complex*
5. **Patricia Holsapple**, *CEO, Swift & Staley, Inc*
6. **Nick Stanisich**, *CEO, Portage, Inc.*
7. **Chris Honkomp**, *Director of Procurement Planning, US DOE (Not Present)*

#### **The following summary includes excerpts from the Conference's daily newsletter WM, Symposia, WM2014, Insight.**

This panel session focused on barriers for small businesses in contracting with the US DOE and was delivered from the perspective of both DOE/NNSA officials and small business owner/managers. Small businesses were encouraged to respond to Sources Sought and Requests for Information by "answering the mail" and not simply submitting generic qualification packages. Small businesses should know the project and its requirements and address the requirements in their entirety. When considering a response, small businesses should recognize when your company does not have the capabilities to meet all the requirements and develop teaming strategies to be successful in your submissions.

**Patricia Holsapple** and **Nick Stanisich**, both speaking from the small business perspective, promoted being good stewards of the taxpayer's dollars by responding to projects that you had the knowledge and past performance to demonstrate the capabilities to successfully perform as well as having the established corporate infrastructure to execute the business management activities the contract required.k

The panel was followed by a question and answer session in which attendees main focus was on questions surrounding the Department of Energy's implementation of a new rule counting some prime subcontractors subcontracting toward small business goals. All DOE officials on the panel agreed that it should have little impact on DOE prime contracting to small businesses.

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### Summary of Presentations

**John Hale** opened by stating that the mission of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization is to maximize contract and financial opportunities for small business in the DOE. He encouraged small businesses to participate in DOE's annual conference and summits to network and hear the latest comments from DOE and DOE prime contractors, such as:

- Federal Government Annual Procurement Fair – Washington, DC – April 16<sup>th</sup>
- DOE Challenge HER Women-owned Small Business Forum – Washington, DC – April 17<sup>th</sup>
- DOE Small Business Forum & Expo, Tampa, FL June 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Hale was the first of the panel to mention the changes under Section 318 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 that directs the Department to include first tier subcontracts awarded by M&O contractors in its small business achievements and said that they are coordinating detailed implementation with the SBA.

**Jack Surash** and **John Evett** tag-teamed their presentations with Mr. Surash presenting first. He stated that DOE EM is committed to creating sustainable contract opportunities for small business by increasing the amount of meaningful work for small business prime contracting. He encouraged small business to respond to sources sought and requests for information if they had the qualifications, as this is the tool they use to determine if solicitations will be set aside for small businesses or not, stating that if two or more small businesses were deemed qualified it would come out as a small business set aside. Mr. Surash highlighted current EM small business contracts and provided the following on upcoming awards.

<u>Procurement</u>	<u>Anticipated Award Date</u>
• Energy Technology Engineering Center	July-Sept. 2014
• Paducah Infrastructure	Jan.-March 2015
• Portsmouth Infrastructure	Jan.-March 2015
• Hanford 222-S Lab Services	Jan.-March 2015
• Oak Ridge Transuranic Waste Processing	TBD

**John Evett** covered the EM field offices small business funding and goals. He also offered several EM small business program outreach opportunities to hear about and discuss upcoming opportunities with DOE and DOE primes as well as meeting other small and large businesses for potential teaming opportunities.

- Waste Management Symposia
- Hanford Bridging Partnerships Small Business Symposium
- Waste Management & Cleanup Decisionmaker's Forum
- ETEBA Conference

**Greg Gonzales** went over the FY 2014 NNSA Budget Request of \$11.7 billion and provided the following breakdown.

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- Legacy Contractor Pensions 3.2%
- Integrated & Effective Enterprise 4.7%
- Reduce Nuclear Dangers 17.6%
- Nuclear Weapons Stockpile 22.5%
- Science, Technology & Engineering Base 13.0%
- Security & Nuclear Counterterrorism 5.8%
- Modernize Infrastructure 22.5%
- Advance Naval Nuclear Propulsion 10.7%

Mr. Gonzales detailed an upcoming procurement opportunity for NEPA Environmental Services across the NNSA and DOE enterprise. The NEPA opportunity is estimated to come out the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY 2014 as a 5 year contract under GSA Schedule 899 with an approximate value of \$125M.

Mr. Gonzales also outlined several of the issues small businesses have when working with DOE/NNSA.

- Selecting NAICS codes whose size standards are too small
- Using GSA Schedules instead of issuing a FAR 15 contract
- Reverse Auctions
- Issuing IDIQ contracts and significantly underutilizing them
- Issuing Small Business IDIQ contracts and using other existing contracts with large business instead

**Patricia Holsapple** speaking as a Small Business owner addressed some of the barriers faced by small businesses and how to overcome those barriers.

- Fear – Take on work you know you can perform successfully
- People – Look for experience personnel and good teaming partners
- Skills – Train, Motivate and Appreciate your employees

**Nick Stanisich** also spoke from the Small Business perspective identifying several solutions for small businesses to overcome the barriers of doing business with DOE sighting that a mature business infrastructure includes:

- Knowledge and experience performing similar work being proposed
- Understand DOE Orders, guidance and technical standards
- Mature programs in ES&H, QA/QC, etc.
- Have a DCAA approved cost system