



NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

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"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Improvements to the SPS-A in time for end of year activity

By Larry D. McCaskill
Public and Congressional Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—The fourth quarter is a busy time of each fiscal year for Army contracting professionals and the challenge for many is a combination of the sheer volume of contracts, the complexity of each transaction, and also accessing and using the Standard Procurement System-Army to process the transactions.

"There is a mad rush at the end of every fiscal year to get requirements on contract in order to serve our customers and ensure the Army meets its mission successfully," explained Gino

Magnifico, Army Contracting Command deputy chief of staff, G6, chief information officer. "This year ACC has implemented technology improvements that will help SPS-A users reach SPS-A faster and move more data more quickly across the system."

With more than 6,000 users in the Army worldwide, SPS-A processed more than 244,000 actions worth \$88 billion in products and services last year. According to Ed Stayton, chief, G6 enterprise operations, keeping the system running smoothly, while implementing upgrades and onboarding new users, is a challenge but one that the G6 team has well under control.

"We anticipated the fourth quarter will be a time of intense usage and we made some significant changes to the system so users can be assured they'll have access and responsiveness from SPS-A," Stayton explained.

ACC G6 recently completed moving all physical servers into a consolidated, virtual environment, and Stayton said that allows G6 to make changes and adjustments quickly. As a result, users will see a marked improvement in SPS-A performance over previous years.

"Virtualization allows us to add more processors, memory or even more servers to meet requirements in hours versus days," Stayton said. "The consolidation also allows maintenance and updates to all be done from one location, eliminating the need for individual sites to perform system administration and annual upgrades, thus saving time, money and resources."

G6 also installed new interfaces to help optimize connectivity to the system, addressing the two biggest problems users have experienced: time delays and disconnects.

"The new interfaces have already reduced latency-time delay—and improved connectivity across the command," said Stayton. "We'll continue to improve. While we can't control what happens on a network, we are working to ensure that users can reestablish their sessions without losing the work they've already completed."

In the meantime, SPS-A users can help make the fourth quarter contracts rush go more smoothly on their end by following three suggestions. The first is to get to know their local information technology functional administrator. If users don't know who this is, users are encouraged to contact Stayton at edward.l.stayton2.civ@mail.mil or (256) 955-8610).

The second thing users can do to help make the fourth quarter a little easier is to ensure their system has the most current approved plug-ins. The latest version of the CITRIX software

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Strange accepts command of the 412th CSB



Expeditionary Contracting Command Commanding General Brig Gen. Ted Harrison, (right) passes the colors of the 412th Contracting Support Brigade to Col. Timothy J. Strange July 10 during the brigade's change of command ceremony at the U.S. Army North Quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The outgoing commander, Col. Jeff Morris, is now the Mission and Installation Contracting Command chief of staff.

Agile

Proficient

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Spotlight on...

Staff Sgt. Trevah A. Goins

A contracting specialist with the 901st Contingency Contracting Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas, Staff Sgt. Trevah A. Goins is currently deployed to Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar with the U.S. Central Command's Joint Theater Support Contracting Command.

Formerly an automated logistical supply specialist, 92 alpha, Goins reclassified to the contracting field for a change and an opportunity to progress.

"I decided to make the switch to contracting after a co-worker and friend told me about the contracting career field. I was already looking to reclassify out of the 92A career program because there was little room for growth as the field was extremely over strength," said the single

mother of two.

With less than one year in contracting experience, Goins said this deployment is giving her a solid background in contracting but at a cost.

"I have a son who just turned 15 this month and a daughter who turned 11 in May," said the Buffalo, N.Y. native. "It is always hard leaving my children behind on deployments. My kids are real troopers though. They take my being gone very well. Unfortunately, like me, this is not their first deployment either. Luckily for me I have my mother as my support system. She watches over my children while I am away which gives me a peace of mind while I am gone."

"I enjoy my job because I am



Staff Sgt. Trevah Goins
901st Contingency Contracting Battalion

providing things that the Soldier, sailor, airman, Marine cannot get on their own so that they can continue with their mission," she said. "I'm here so that they don't have to worry about procuring what they need for mission accomplishment.

Anonymous Email Program

<https://acc.aep.army.mil/Pages/Anonymous.aspx>

For Army Contracting Command employees who have concerns about their work environment, leadership issues or who want to offer a better way to do business but don't know where to turn, the Commander's Anonymous Email Program is the answer.

It allows employees and Soldiers across the command to voice their concerns or ideas freely and confidentially directly to Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general.

"I personally review each message," Nichols said. "I want to know what's on people's minds, their good ideas for moving the command forward, what's troubling them, and what I can do to help them be more successful. We'll do our best to address concerns promptly and confidentially. Some of the tougher issues may take a little longer to resolve, but you can be sure we are working them."

Karina Haddix, ACC executive officer, manages the program. She said the commander receives between 10 to 15 emails through the program monthly.

"It's important for people to be specific in explaining their issue or suggestion," she said. "It's hard for the commander to take action on an issue at a specific location if the anonymous email doesn't include the location."

Haddix said the Anonymous Email Program is not a substitute for using the chain of command or other established programs such as the inspector general.

"However, when we receive an anonymous email, we act on it," she said.

The program supports ACC's strategic priority of enhancing the working environment and quality of life for the workforce.

"We want our employees to be



comfortable in their work environment and be confident that leadership is here to provide the resources and support required for them to be the best they can be," Nichols said.

Responses will be addressed in either a message on the ACC SharePoint internal portal, a policy memorandum, or in the NewsBlast, ACC's weekly newsletter. The link to the Commander's Anonymous Email is on the ACC SharePoint home page at <https://acc.aep.army.mil/Pages/Anonymous.aspx>.

Value, efficiency award contest under way

WASHINGTON—President Obama has launched this year’s Securing Americans Value and Efficiency Award contest.

The SAVE Award contest will run through July 24. The winner will have the opportunity to present his or her idea to the president, according to Joseph W. Westphal, undersecretary of the Army.

Begun by the president in 2009, the SAVE Award contest encourages federal employees to submit ideas for innovative ways to reduce spending within their respective agencies and departments, Westphal said in a memo to Army senior leaders. Since 2009, federal employees have submitted more than 75,000 ideas, he said. These ideas have led to agencies saving

hundreds of millions of dollars, rooting out redundancy and waste, and making government more efficient, effective, and accountable to the American people.

“The Army senior leadership team wants to make you aware of the launch of this year’s contest and encourages participation throughout the department,” he said.

All contest submissions are confidential, and can be made at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/save-award>.

“I fully endorse and support the SAVE Award and ask that you do the same,” Westphal said. “Please encourage your personnel to submit their innovative ideas during the award period.”

Any questions about the SAVE Award should be directed to DoDSAVEAward@osd.mil.




Click on the image for ACC safety messages.

ACC, ECC Organizational Day activities at Point Mallard

By Ed Worley
Public and Congressional Affairs

DECATUR, Ala.—The olympics are coming to Point Mallard Park next week.

The Army Contracting Command and Expeditionary Contracting Command headquarters olympics, that is. The two headquarters staffs will kick off their annual Organizational Day 8 a.m. July 25 at the water park.

It will be a day filled with friendly competition, food and socializing, according to Sandy Merritt, human resources specialist, ACC deputy chief of staff, G1 Human Capital, and Organizational Day project officer.

Participants will be able to show off in the “ACC/ECC’s Got Talent” show, face off in table games such as bingo, cards, dominos and board games, and show their athleticism in the “ACC/ECC Olympics.” Competitors will vie for medals in volleyball, horseshoes, bean bag toss, Hula Hoop contest, tug-of-war with staff section teams, and three-legged, water balloon and wheelbarrow races.

“I was looking for a place where we could get away from the work, get away from the stress and just enjoy the day,” Merritt said of the Point Mallard Park selection. “We had a good time last year (at the event held on Redstone Arsenal), but I heard a lot of people saying they

were going back to the office. Maybe by us being so far away, they won’t be tempted to go back to the office.”

Merritt said the Organizational Day activities will be held at the park’s Expo Center, which is a large, blue pavilion.

Tickets for this year’s event are \$5 per family and are available in each campus facility. Several fund-raising events helped keep the cost low, Merritt said.

According to Courtney Joyce, a manpower analyst in ACC deputy chief of staff, G8 Resource Management, the Organization Day committee netted \$700 from its eight fund-raising events.

Tickets cover all Organizational Day events, including food. Parking is free. Merritt said the committee needs a good head count for food and encouraged attendees to buy their tickets early.

Organizational Day T-shirts will be available for purchase beginning July 20, Merritt said. Shirts will cost between \$10 and \$15 based on size and can be purchased in relocatable building 3334-H.

Merritt said entrance to Point Mallard Park water park or use of other park facilities are not included in the \$5 ticket, but the park is offering half-price admissions that day. Directions to Point Mallard Park are available at <http://www.pointmallardpark.com/directions.php>.



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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the U.S. Army or this command.

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Improvements continued from page 1

is version 12.1. If users' plug-ins are not up-to-date, they should contact their local functional administrator to get the latest versions installed.

Finally, SPS-A users should consider reducing their time using the COGNOS software reporting tool during the fourth quarter. COGNOS is processor-intensive and, as a result, slows down the database that runs SPS-A for all users. Instead, users are encouraged to use the Army Contracting Business Intelli-

gence System for reports. To support this, the ACBIS interface at SPS-A has been updated to run hourly to provide the most up to date reporting possible.

"By following these three tips, along with the virtualization and other improvements we've made on our end, users should have a much smoother experience with SPS-A during the fourth quarter," predicts Stayton.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Contracting Oversight: A Long Way to Go

By David Isenberg.

Author, 'Shadow Force: Private Security Contractors in Iraq'

The Huffington Post, Posted July 16

Reconstruction was a key part of the effort to bring stability to Iraq after the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. But there were serious weaknesses in the government's controls over Iraq reconstruction funds that put billions of American taxpayer dollars at risk of waste and misappropriation, according to a just released report from the Special inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR).

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-isenberg/contracting-oversight-a-1_b_1670078.html

ACC's new G3 among leadership changes

By Edward G. Worley

EYE on AMC, Posted July 16

Army Contracting Command's new deputy chief of staff, G3 Mission Operations, is a new face among several leadership changes across the command. Col. D. D. Mayfield succeeded Col. Jerry Jones June 1. Jones is now the Expeditionary Contracting Command chief of staff.

<http://go.usa.gov/RAS>

Signing ceremony in Huntsville recognizes multi-year helicopter contract

By Marian Accardi

The Huntsville Times, Published July 16

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- A signing ceremony in Huntsville today recognized a five-year, \$8.5 billion contract for Sikorsky Aircraft to build 653 H-60 Black Hawk and Seahawk helicopters for the U.S. Army and Navy.

http://blog.al.com/huntsville-times-business/2012/07/signing_ceremony_in_huntsville.html

