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What's happening with Women-Owned businesses in Federal Contracting?

That is the question that everyone would like to know. It seems that the Small Business Women's Procurement Program is taking another twist. On January 11th, the Small Business Administration (SBA) announced that it was again reopening the comment period for 60 days for public input.

At this time, the SBA has deemed 31 industry areas to be under represented by women's participation in federal contracting. SBA has for a number of years established a goal of 5% of federal contacts to women. Although the exact number is debated, the goal has yet to be reached.

So what can you, as a woman-owned business, do in the meantime to improve your position to obtain a federal prime or subcontract? First, understand your business strengths and capitalize on your past experience as a supplier in the commercial sector. Second, put together a Capability Statement for your business. (see page 4 for information on Maine PTAC's online Capability Statement Workshop) Third, make sure all your registrations are up to date.

I am often asked, "Do I need to be certified as a women business?" The answer is No...but.

The federal government does not require a woman-owned small business to go through a certification process. Small businesses that are controlled by women, 'self-declare' that they are woman-owned businesses as part of the SBA portion of the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and the On-line Representations and Certifications (ORCA).



Erica Libby & Michelle Atherton
Owners-New Form Building Supply
dba New Form Supply

Now, here is the "but" portion. Some of the larger Federal Prime Contractors want to have an independent third party certify that your business is indeed a woman-owned business. Again, this is not required by every Prime contractor but there are a number of primes out there that might require such certification as a condition of subcontracting with your business. If you do want to have a third party "certify" your business as woman-owned, expect to pay around \$350. This expense is a business choice for you to make but you may want to wait until it is required by a prime contractor. Meanwhile, stay tuned for more changes to come for woman-owned businesses in procurement.

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CCR Implements User Account Requirement

The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) process is undergoing some significant changes that are important to all companies that are interested in selling products or services to the federal government. Between now and July 1, 2009, CCR is transitioning from a TPIN log-in process for a Company to create a CCR registration or access their existing registration to a User ID and Password System. Because of this, all Companies with a CCR Registration should create a User Account in CCR by June 30, 2009. All Companies that are creating a new CCR Registration will also need to create a User Account in CCR as part of the initial CCR Registration process.

CCR has created an on-line User Account Virtual Tutorial to assist businesses with this transition. To view the tutorial go to <http://www.ccr.gov> and click on the "User Account Virtual Tutorial" link.

For additional guidance go to <http://www.ccr.gov/doc/UserAccount.pdf> to access CCR's User Account Guide and <http://www.ccr.gov/FAQ.aspx#accounts> for User Account frequently asked questions.

Welcome Michael Aube

On January 5th, Michael Aube became the new president of Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Maine PTAC's host organization. However, Mike is no stranger to EMDC for he held that same position, from 1981 to 1992. He is very familiar with the assistance that Maine PTAC provides to Maine businesses, since it was under his leadership that EMDC became the host of the statewide PTAC program. We welcome Mike and his commitment to providing government contracting assistance to Maine businesses.



E-Verify Update:

The E-Verify requirement, for federal contractors to confirm the employment eligibility of all persons hired during the contract term, has been delayed until at least May 21st. Use of E-Verify by government contractors is intended to ensure that contractors hire citizens and eligible documented workers. In its current form the rule would exempt: contracts that are for only commercially available items (including food); contracts less than \$100,000; contracts less than 120 days in Duration; and contracts performed outside of the United States.

 **E-Verify** Employment Eligibility Verification

Maine PTAC Announces its New Office Locations

Maine PTAC will be expanding its office locations which should make it more convenient for many Maine PTAC clients to visit their counselor. Maine PTAC clients in Aroostook County will soon obtain services from Northern Maine Development Corporation at 11 West Presque Isle Road, Caribou. Maine PTAC clients in the counties of Oxford, Franklin and Androscoggin will receive services from Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments located at 125 Manley Road, Auburn. Maine PTAC's Bath office at 7 Park Street, although not a new site for us, will be staffed by Ed Dahl.

These changes will be implemented over the next month and all affected clients will be individually notified of the exact date of this transition.

NAICS Codes - A Primer

Whether you're a neophyte or an old hand at government contracting, knowing the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code(s) applicable to your business is crucial to finding and responding to Federal solicitations. NAICS codes are an integral part of the CCR registration process and are used by Maine PTACs bid matching service to search the various data bases on which federal contracting opportunities are posted. Federal agency Contracting Officers must assign a NAICS code to each contract and bid solicitation when commencing a competitive bidding action. NAICS Codes are also used by the Small Business Administration (SBA) to determine if a business is large or small for federal government contracting purposes. To learn more about SBA size standards go to: <http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/officials/size/index.html>.

NAICS was developed in the early 1990s under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and was formally adopted in 1997. It has largely replaced the older Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system; however, certain government departments and agencies, such as the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), still use the SIC codes.

OMB is responsible for the maintenance and review of NAICS. To ensure the relevance, accuracy, and timeliness of NAICS business and industry classifications, the coding structure is reviewed every five years to determine what, if any, changes are required to ensure it continues to relate to emerging technologies and business trends. The comment period for the 2012 NAICS Code revision is currently open.

The official U.S. Government Web site (<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>) provides the latest information on plans for NAICS revisions, as well as access to various NAICS reference files and search tools. This includes an on-line search engine that allows businesses to research the NAICS database by keyword to determine their applicable NAICS Code(s).

Any Maine business interested in federal government contracting opportunities should know their applicable NAICS Code(s) and understand their relevance in the federal contracting arena. To make sure that your applicable NAICS Codes are included in your company's CCR record go to <http://www.ccr.gov> to review your company's CCR information. If NAICS changes or updates are needed, be sure to also advise your PTAC counselor of those changes. Remember, if you are interested in receiving notice of relevant federal government opportunities, NAICS codes can comprise an important criterion in your Maine PTAC bid match profile.

2009 Upcoming Events Calendar

- **March 10**
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Maine PTAC/Government Contracting Overview-Hosted by Maine PTAC
Norway Town Office- To register: Jennifer Dumond at jdumond@emdc.org
- **March 24**
10:00 am - noon
Proposal Writing Workshop-Hosted by Maine PTAC
68 Marginal Way, Portland, ME- To register: Jennifer Dumond at jdumond@emdc.org
- **March 26**
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
SCORE/SBA Workshop - Doing Business with the Government
LAEGC, 415 Lisbon Street, Lewiston- To register: bonnie.erickson@sba.gov
- **April 7**
10:00 am - noon
Introduction to Government Contracting-Hosted by Maine PTAC
190 Main St. 3rd fl, Saco, ME- To register: Jennifer Dumond at jdumond@emdc.org
- **April 22**
8:00 am- 3:30 pm
19th Annual OSDBU Procurement Conference
Dulles Expo Center North Hall, Chantilly, VA- www.fbcinc.com/osdbu09
- **May 6**
10:00 am - noon
Introduction to Government Contracting-Hosted by Maine PTAC
City Hall, Ellsworth, ME- To register: Jennifer Dumond at jdumond@emdc.org
- **May 13**
10:00 am - noon
GSA Schedules Workshop
40 Harlow Street, Bangor, ME- To register: Jennifer Dumond at jdumond@emdc.org
- **May 19**
10:00 am - noon
GSA Schedules Workshop
68 Marginal Way, Portland, ME- To register: Jennifer Dumond at jdumond@emdc.org
- **July 20-23**
5th Annual National Veteran Small Business Conference and Expo
Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, NV - www.nationalveteransconference.com

*For More information regarding these events go to www.maineptac.org/html/calendar.html

Mo & Flo on The Maine PTAC eCenter

Hey Mo, Watcha lookin' so durned glum about? Y' look like the whole world's been a pick'in on ya"



"Well Flo, y' ain't fur off. Snowplow hit my mailbox n' busted it t' smithereens. Broke both belts on the snowblower n' cain't find new ones, Wife's getting' cabin fever with snow halfway t' the eaves and no new catalogs f' over a week an' now that dadgummed Maine PTAC cancelled my

bid match!"

"Sorry t' hear about the mailbox, the snowblower an' the Missus, Mo, but about the bid match; they's two sides t' every story an I'll just bet they's more you ain't tellin' me. C'mon Mo, why 'd the PTAC stop y' bid match?"

"Well, I'd no more n' got used t' sendin' in them surveys o' theirs by email n' they blossom out with some new thigamajig where I wuz s'posed do the survey on the inta'net with passwords n' all. So' I ain't been answerin' their surveys. That's why!"

"Mo, y' stubborn ol' mule! You know how t' use a computer. PTAC sent everybody an email with their password an' even told em' how t' get their password if they forgot it. So you just decided t' up an' not do it!" You know durned well PTAC's told us a dozen times they'd stop sendin' us bid matches if we don't answer the surveys. So, watcha goin' t' do now Mo?"

"I'm goin t' buy me a new mail box and a shovel, pick up some readin' material f' the missus an' answer that dadblamed survey, Flo! Now watcha grinnin' about? I swear. You an' them PTAC folks are in cahoots!"

Government Contracting On-line Workshops

Maine PTAC has created two on-line workshops related to government contracting that can be viewed anytime from your computer. The first is an "Introduction to Government Contracting" workshop and the second, which just came on line in January, is "Capability Statement - A Resume for your Business". Both of these can be accessed from the home page of the Maine PTAC website <http://www.maineptac.org>.



A program of Eastern Maine Development Corporation

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