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ANSWER CONTRACT FACTOIDS!

42 Task Orders
 3.0 Bids/ New Task Order
 1.98B Funded Sales
 5.41B Estimated Value

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ANSWER Contract Supports The Balkan Times Website Expansion The ANSWER Staff

Anteon was awarded an ANSWER task order to expand the popular Balkan Times website (www.balkantimes.com), a DoD-sponsored, unique source of timely, accurate, and comprehensive open source news about events in Southeast Europe. The focus of the task is keeping foreign audiences informed of US Government public information themes and the U.S. European Command's intent for the region. GSA's National Capitol Region under the ANSWER Contract awarded the task order.

Originally, the Balkan Times website supported language translation from English to Croatian, International and local news, and three original features. The Websites success prompted the expansion, which increases audience accessibility by including translation to native languages, including search capabilities for all supported languages. Additionally, the site's expansion features daily articles from international and local media sources and five original articles per week.



Now known as the Southeast European Times, the website supports ten languages, some of which are non-Latin based: Turkish, Romanian, Macedonian, Greek, Croatian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Serbian (both Latin and Cyrillic), and English. Anteon's advanced expertise in Unicode character sets allowed this enhanced feature, providing the audience with articles ranging in content from peacekeeping information to popular music, all in their native languages.

Anteon employs a worldwide, multi-disciplinary team of Balkan specialists, journalists' photographers, and web developers for 24 x 7 content generation, editing, translation, and web hosting. Anteon's highly skilled support team ensures the security of the website, provides statistical summaries of visitor demographics, and alerts DoD of any suspicious activities.

Push to Unbundle Contracts Continues Monti Jaggars

The Senate recently passed an amendment to the 2004 Defense Authorization bill that would limit the Defense Department's use of bundled contracts. The amendment affecting DoD comes on the heels of the recent OMB proposed changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) which would force both civilian and defense agencies to split large contracts into several smaller ones in many cases. The Senate amendment precludes the department, armed services and Defense agencies from executing an acquisition strategy that includes a consolidation contract in excess of \$5 million unless a senior procurement executive first: conducts market research, identifies alternative contracting approaches that involve less consolidation, and determines that the consolidation is "necessary and justified."

The OMB proposal, published in the Jan. 31 Federal Register, would amend the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the Small Business Administration's rules for small business prime contracting assistance. Under the OMB proposal, agencies must provide greater justification for bundling decisions and have the decisions reviewed at higher levels. The new bundling review and oversight requirements will specifically apply to orders under task and delivery order contracts. Even more significant, the rules require that task or purchase orders under Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), Federal Supply Schedule or other existing contracts, as well as new contracts, be subject to the same review process and requirements for justifying a bundled award.

Solutions Edu Prepares for Fourth Successful Year *Sherrie Householder*

The ANSWER Government-wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) Center is currently developing the FY04 schedule for Solutions Edu, a nationwide, value-added educational service initiative of the GWAC Centers. Solutions Edu began in FY01 and has evolved to a multi-service approach, with students attending from client agencies, industry, GSA FTS (IT & Network), FSS, PBS and Legal. A total of 24 courses have been provided this fiscal year to date in locations ranging from Alaska to Hawaii. There are 16 different courses offered, including Performance-Based Statement of Work, Price Negotiation & Source Selection, Section 508, Statement of Objectives, Contracting for Services under Multiple Award/Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (MA/IDIQ), Acquisition and Procurement Planning, Contract Administration, and Project Management. Solutions Edu courses are structured to provide specific, hands-on procurement training on GSA GWACs but the instruction easily transfers across GSA services. Solutions Edu was one of the first programs to offer training in performance-based contracting and the training on Section 508 compliance was one of the most requested courses in FY03.

The International Association has approved the Solutions Edu program as an authorized provider of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Continuing Education and Training (IACET). IACET certifies that education providers and programs meet strict continuing education guidelines. With the IACET accreditation, Solutions Edu courses will provide the credits necessary to maintain contracting officer warrants. The FY03 summary performance rating on post-course surveys is 4.62 out of a possible 5.0. Since its inception three years ago, Solutions Edu has maintained a notable summary performance record of 4.6 out of 5.0 on post-course surveys.

Check out <http://answer.gsa.gov> and select Solutions Edu for the list of courses offered and the current FY03 class dates and locations. FY04 classes begin October 2003 with an initial schedule of one class per month through December 2003. The complete FY04 schedule will be posted upon completion. Classes are offered free of charge to government attendees so classes fill up quickly. Register now! Regional POCs should contact monteze.jaggers@gsa.gov to schedule classes for their regions.

GAO Reviews Federal Acquisition Workforce Training *Monti Jaggers*

GAO's continuing reviews of the acquisition workforce, focusing on the Department of Defense (DOD); the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Energy, and Health and Human Services; the General Services Administration; and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, indicate that some of the government's largest procurement operations are not run efficiently. GAO found that requirements are not clearly defined, prices and alternatives are not fully considered, or contracts are not adequately overseen. The ongoing technological revolution requires a workforce with new knowledge, skills, and abilities, and the nature of acquisition is changing from routine simple buys toward more complex acquisitions and new business practices. Most acquisition professionals will need to acquire a new set of skills focusing on business management. Because of a more sophisticated acquisition environment, they can no longer be merely purchasers or process managers. Instead, they will also need to be adept at analyzing business problems and assisting with developing strategies in the early stages of the acquisition.

Training is critical in ensuring that the acquisition workforce has the right skills. However, GAO found that agencies did not have processes for ensuring that training reaches all those who need it. The GAO review found that the challenge for civilian agencies ensuring their acquisition workforce is receiving the proper training has been made more difficult by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy's (OFPP's) slow progress in implementing the Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS). Continued delays in implementing this system will increase the time in which agencies have to use less sophisticated tools for tracking acquisition workforce training. GAO recommended that the Administrator of OFPP continue to monitor the ACMIS contract milestones to ensure that the contractor and the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) complete and implement the proposed government-wide system on schedule.

June Events

Date: 6/2-6/4
Location: San Francisco/Oakland
Event: Q12 Training/All Hands
ANSWER GWAC Meeting

Date: 6/9-6/13
Location: Denver, CO
Event: Solutions Edu-PBSOW
Training

Date: 6/18-6/19
Location: Washington, DC
Event: FX Meeting, Crystal City

Date: 6/24
Location: Chicago, IL
Event: ANSWER Quarterly
Program Meeting

Date: 6/25
Location: Chicago, IL
Event: FORUM

Date: 6/26
Location: Fairborn, OH
Event: Solution Seminars

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