



PACA Pulse

SUMMER 2021

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PROFESSIONAL AEROSPACE CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF NEW MEXICO

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Spaceport America's Latest News

By Scott McLaughlin, Executive Director, Spaceport America

Starting on August 22, 2021, Spaceport America (SpA) staff attended both the one-day annual meeting of the Aerospace States Association (ASA), and the week-long annual National Space Symposium (NSS) in Colorado Springs. Executive Director **Scott McLaughlin** and Director of Business Development **Susan Raitt** were present along with Economic Development Department Secretary **Alicia Keyes** and **Martina C'de Baca**, the Director of Operations for the Lt. Governor's office.

ASA is organized to work on aerospace policy and the annual meeting is a chance for Lt. Governors (or their designees) to talk about policy and planned events that support aerospace growth. The NSS is a large symposium with talks, meetings, and a large exhibition. At the exhibition, Spaceport America had a booth alongside the New Mexico Partnership, which was represented by **Melinda Allen** (President and CEO) and **Tim Morgan** (Vice President). NewSpace New Mexico was also represented by **Casey DeRaad** (CEO) and **Joe Bullington**.

With the recent flights of Virgin Galactic, and a growing reputation for hosting many other customers such as UAVs, suborbital rocket flights, and balloon flights, Spaceport America and New Mexico were warmly received. Many people who came by the booth commented on how much they had seen going on at SpA and New Mexico in general. The Partnership brought State of New Mexico flag pins to give away, and these were quickly absorbed by the many visitors who were proud to say they were somehow affiliated with New Mexico.

Along with the Partnership, SpA had many positive interactions for business development, both for the State as a whole and SpA. There were several prospects

interested in what New Mexico has to offer with respect to its universities, and specifics about Las Cruces and Albuquerque. Uniquely, New Mexico can offer great testing and development space, as well as connections to the DOE labs, the Air Force, the Space Force, and the Army. The growing entrepreneurial feel of New Mexico — and these competitive advantages — helped people see New Mexico as part of "Space 2.0." For next year, the plan is to increase our presence by having a larger booth and being sure to work with all of the other companies and groups from New Mexico to amplify our state's positive influence in the aerospace community. •



Development Director Susan Raitt posing next to a NextGen spacesuit

President's Corner

By Mike Robson



We are now well past the halfway point of 2021, and it has certainly been an eventful year. The pandemic is still affecting our day-to-day lives as the mask mandate is back and the threat of renewed lockdowns loom. But business is still being conducted and contracts are being let, which is cause for optimism. And PACA is about

helping our members and affiliates connect to create more work in the state of New Mexico.

As we move toward the final quarter of the year, PACA is making strides to this end. As an all-volunteer organization, we have been working hard to get back to life as we once knew it to be. Many of our members participated in the first Topgolf STEM Outing back in June, which was a great opportunity to reunite as an organization face-to-face while enjoying great food, drinks, and some sport.

The PACA board also resumed in-person meetings again in July, which was a welcome first step on the road to normalcy. Later that month we held our first in-person luncheon since March of 2020 at M'Tucci's. Although we didn't have a speaker for it, we were able to engage with other members, meet new people, and pass out some business cards. That was followed up by a live/virtual hybrid meeting at Season's Rotisserie & Grill in August, where **Dr. Michael Starks** of AFRL addressed the group. In case you missed it, Dr. Starks had a fascinating presentation with some actionable information and was a great example of what PACA is expected to deliver to the membership.

PACA members can look forward to more of this to come. Our Program Officer **David DeBonis**, has filled up the speaker pipeline for the next several months. In September, we will welcome **Patrick Gannon** from the New Mexico Economic Development Department. He will address our members about opportunities that the state has to aid your company in growth and expansion. Mr. Gannon will share the inside track on how to take advantage of these programs, which can be game-changing for companies that are in growth mode.

As mentioned above, PACA held its first STEM Outing at Topgolf earlier this year, and the follow-up will be held this month. This will be a quarterly event that will benefit STEM education in New Mexico. The Topgolf venue is a beautiful facility that serves up some great food, drink, and a good time. We look forward to doing many more of these going forward. If you haven't been to Topgolf yet or if you aren't a golfer, I encourage you to come out and try it. You don't have to be any good to have a great time. Most people there are not golfers (including the author, but he thinks he is)!

On the topic of golf, the 3rd Annual PACA STEM Education

Golf Tournament will be held in late September. This has become an event that many of our members look forward to. The tournament started in 2019 and was almost canceled last year, so it is a point of pride for us that this will be the 3rd consecutive tournament in light of what has transpired over the last year and a half. This is our big fund raising event that goes to support STEM education where 100% of the proceeds make it to organizations that are making a difference. Last year, Explora! was the beneficiary, and the money was allocated to helping build out a new wing of their facility.

Last on the list, but near the top of mind for some of us on the board, is the website. As you might have noticed, it is a tad outdated. If you haven't noticed, I'm sorry I drew attention to it! However, **Austin Potter** (our new VP) and myself have been engaged with web developers to rebuild and modernize the site. We are very excited about rolling it out later this year. In the meantime, we'll keep the existing site as functional as possible.

With all that said, I would like to thank all of our members for continuing to engage with PACA. We are diligently working to restore what was lost in 2020 and make it even more valuable to the membership than before. I hope you enjoyed my musings once again, and I look forward to seeing everyone at lunch, or with a club in hand, or both! •

WELCOME New Members!

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Legal Insights: Checklist of Technical Discriminators That Add Value to Contract Proposals

By Ross L. Crown

Technical discriminators, which distinguish one technical proposal from another, frequently determine contract awards in best value procurements conducted by the federal government. Bid protest decisions of the Government Accountability Office and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims commonly address those discriminators that agencies find significant in evaluating technical proposals. Examples of such technical discriminators include the following:



Quality of Technical Proposal

- Satisfies every agency requirement in statement of work
- Clearly organized
- Complete and detailed explanation of technical approach, including:
 - Staffing
 - Implementation
 - Schedule
 - Sequence
 - Testing
 - Tasks
 - Methodology
 - Quality Control
- Substantiates proposed performance
- Demonstrates understanding of new developments in technology/industry
- Identifies solutions to problems with agency's existing systems/programs

Quality of Products and/or Services

- Use of standard materials
- Use of commercially available components
- Superior product design
- Superior product testing process
- Minimizes environmental impact of work
- Reduces energy consumption
- Tailoring of deliverables to specific agency needs
- Design adaptable to future needs
- Extended support services
- Regular reports to agency on technology/industry trends
- Broader and/or longer warranty
- Additions exceeding agency requirements

Quality of Personnel

- Experience related to proposed work
- Specialized expertise
- Highly qualified subcontractors

Quality of Contract Management

- Plan for retention of incumbent personnel
- Expedited recruitment of necessary employees
- Expedited commencement of work
- Accelerated schedule
- Streamlined work flow
- Coordination of tasks
- Minimized duplication of effort
- Cybersecurity enhancements
- Process for soliciting/addressing customer feedback •

Ross is a partner in the Albuquerque office of Lewis Roca where his practice emphasizes government contracts. He can be contacted at RCrown@lewisroca.com. This article is intended for general information only and should not be construed as legal advice or opinion. Any questions concerning your legal rights or obligations in any particular circumstance should be directed to your lawyer.

Join PACA!

PACA membership annual dues are \$150*. The fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31. Mid-year applications will be pro-rated. You may apply and pay dues at www.pacanm.org.

For more information, contact the Membership Chair, **Matt Keihl**, at MKeihl@utcd Dayton.com or **505-362-6860**.

* Dues are subject to change. •

Spread the News

If you know a potential member or anyone else who would like to receive the *PACA Pulse*, please forward their e-mail address to **Kit Carman** at kitcarman6@gmail.com. •

Upcoming Luncheon Speakers

■ Tuesday, September 21 — Patrick Gannon, Program Manager, Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), NM Economic Development Department



Patrick Gannon represents JTIP statewide to new and existing expanding businesses, economic development organizations, and workforce training institutions which may include on site meetings and presentations to companies and partners statewide. In this capacity he conducts marketing efforts to introduce JTIP and provide in-depth overview of the JTIP / Step Up program policies, eligibility requirements and procedures; assists eligible companies with all aspects of proposal development through the online application process; maintains communication and provides ongoing customer support to all active JTIP clients; and presents employer proposal summaries to the JTIP board with staff recommendation to approve funding requests.

He holds a B.S. from the University of New Mexico Anderson School of Management.

■ Tuesday, October 19 — Dr. Bill Gutman, Director of Aerospace Operations, Spaceport America



Dr. Bill Gutman is responsible for aerospace operations including space launches and airfield management. He assists customers and staff in resolving technical issues; serves as the primary liaison with the US Army White Sands Missile Range; manages launches and flight safety; maintains the FAA launch site operator license; and manages spaceport technical instrumentation. Dr. Gutman can also often be found in the classroom sharing his enthusiasm for space with the next generation.

Prior to joining the Spaceport, Dr. Gutman was a research physicist at the New Mexico State University Physical Sci-

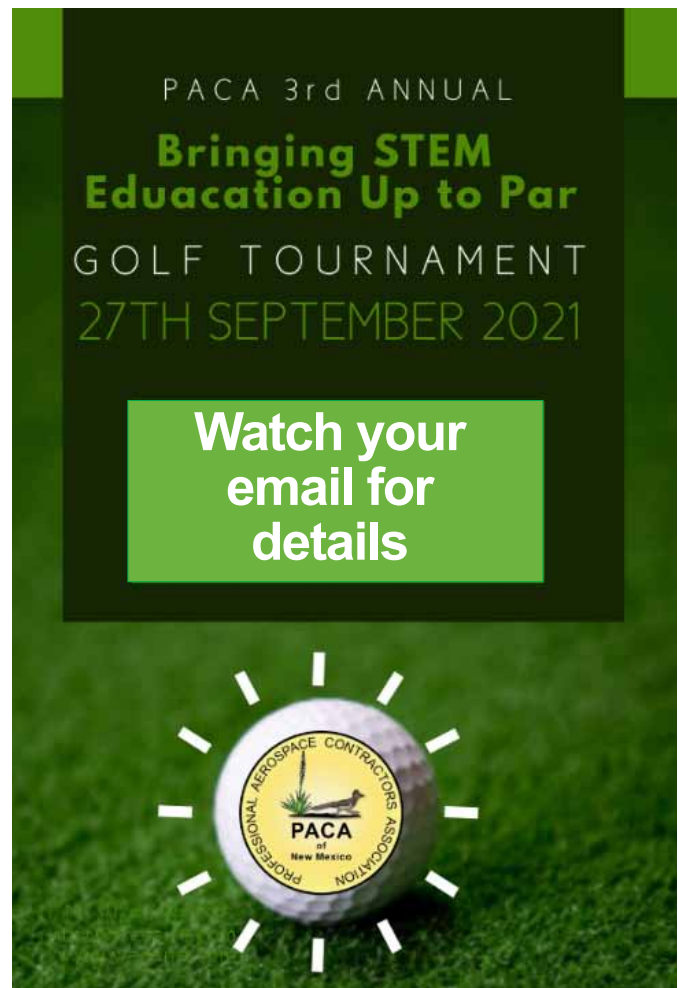
ence Laboratory (NMSU PSL) where worked on a variety of projects. These included providing technical support to the Spaceport; developing advanced sensor systems; performing research in high power laser propagation; investigating military smoke materials; developing optical instrumentation systems; and performing risk assessments of space and aviation systems. Beginning in 1999, he participated in the development of the unmanned aircraft program at NMSU PSL.

Dr. Gutman earned his Ph.D. in optical and molecular

■ Tuesday, November 16 — Dr. Julia Wise, Richard P. Feynman Center of Innovation, LANL NMS-BA Program

Dr. Julia Wise works for the New Mexico Small Business Assistance Program at Los Alamos National Laboratory. She previously worked at the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) where she was responsible for leading and executing the programs and activities required to meet NMEDD's Science and Technology initiatives, and enable and encourage start-up and growth of technology-based industries leading to job creation in the state.

Dr. Wise holds a Ph.D. in geology/geochemistry from the University of Cincinnati. •



PACA 3rd ANNUAL
**Bringing STEM
Education Up to Par**
GOLF TOURNAMENT
27TH SEPTEMBER 2021

**Watch your
email for
details**

PACA
of
New Mexico
PROFESSIONAL AEROSPACE CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

Planning of 34th BFI is Underway

By Ron Unruh, BFI Officer

Greetings all! The last eighteen months has been difficult and at times extremely painful during the pandemic shutdowns and hysteria. PACA was forced to cancel the 2020 Briefing for Industry (BFI) and then to add insult to injury we postponed our 2021 BFI as well. After hosting the event for 33 consecutive years without a postponement or cancellation we were finally forced to do so. In May 2021 we actively started the reconstitution effort for our 34th BFI.



The BFI Committee members have worked diligently with the Air Force Research Laboratory and other Air Force entities to obtain concurrence and support for the event. We have always hosted the event during the month of August but that proved to be an impossibility for 2021. The 34th PACA BFI will be held March 21-24, 2022. It is the first spring BFI that PACA has ever hosted. Our venue will again be the Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town and the government per diem rate will be honored for our attendees.

We recently mailed save-the-date cards to everyone on our mailing list and will be sending out email notifications starting in September. Our BFI Program Committee is busy reaching out to the various Program Executive Officers, agencies, and directors for their support in providing presentations describing their upcoming requirements as well as procurement opportunities. In addition, we are actively pursuing keynote luncheon speakers.

Since we are approximately seven months out from the BFI you can expect to see announcements in beta-SAM, monthly email blasts, as well as updates on the PACA website. If your corporation is not currently a PACA sponsor, now would be a good time to become one as a free booth space will be allocated to each of our sponsors. Please see the website for details on becoming a sponsor. For those Small Businesses who have successfully transitioned a SBIR / STTR from a Phase I to a Phase II or III over the past two years, we are offering you a free booth space as well to display your success story; we will be reaching out to you in the near term. We will continue to provide notifications and updates regarding the event as we progress towards March. Again, please monitor the PACA website, beta-SAM, and social media platforms.

I personally look forward to seeing each of you at the first ever spring edition of the Professional Aerospace Contractors Association Briefing for Industry. •

The Advance of Cybersecurity Standards

By Jonathan Sandmel, CISSP, RP

I have been hearing a growing chorus of concern in the past few weeks about prime contractors putting renewed pressure on small DoD sub-contractors to get their NIST 800-171 self-assessments in order. To those of us in the cybersecurity field, this is not a surprise. In fact, the standard of reporting a self-assessment score to the Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS) (<https://www.sprs.csd.disa.mil/>) has been around since the end of 2017 so the surprise to us is that the pressure is coming so late in the game.

Whether your organization is as small as one person or you have built a team of tens or hundreds of employees, the standards are the same for securing your IT infrastructure. The minimum standards at the moment are the 110 controls outlined on the nist.gov website (<https://csrc.nist.gov/publications/detail/sp/800-171/rev-2/final>). So if you haven't gone through the process of assessing your organization, building a System Security Plan (SSP) and creating a Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM), the time to get started was yesterday. What comes over the next few years will be much more difficult if you haven't completed those initial steps.

The next phase of cybersecurity for DoD subcontractors is called the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) and it's going to take more time, more money, and more planning for a few reasons that I outline below. You have likely heard of the CMMC, but if you feel a sense of whiplash from the changing standards around cybersecurity of the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), rest assured that it is more an evolution than a revolution.

The original standards for the FAR came in the early 20-teens in the form of 15 basic IT safeguards. In the mid 20-teens this evolved to include the 110 controls in the NIST 800-171 and they allowed, until the end of 2017, for subcontractors to get into compliance. However, there has been no meaningful oversight to verify what is being reported is actually being implemented or being interpreted correctly. Meanwhile, cyber-attacks by foreign actors and intellectual property theft are only increasing. The DIB decided it was time to create a "Trust But Verify" system and created the CMMC Accreditation Body in 2019 to police the nearly 50,000 subcontractors working on various DoD contracts throughout the country.

The CMMC allowed for a wider variation in contractor requirements and created five levels of certification. The lowest level 1 certification has only 17 controls, the more advanced Level 3 certification builds on the 110 controls in the NIST 800-171 and adds 20 more practices and processes. Level 5, which would be required for the

Continued on following page

Cybersecurity Standards *continued*

highest security environments including nuclear and missile projects, includes the 130 controls in Level 3 and adds 75 more.

If this sounds difficult and time consuming — it is. The security controls in Level 3 and above require not only a detailed System Security Plan, but no longer allows for the lengthy runway to implement a POAM. All controls need to be implemented, documented, staffed, and financed. Some of the controls in Level 3 and above also require additional monthly tool costs to implement and at least 17 new policies need to be writing. In addition, the CMMC Accreditation Body (CMMC-AB) wants to see that these new processes and practices are alive in the organization, so you will need a paper trail demonstrating that these controls were not implemented the day before certification.

All of this adds up to big challenges for organizations, and disproportionate challenges for smaller companies. If there has been any reprieve, it may have come from COVID-19. The initial timeline was scheduled to begin the process of vetting Certified 3rd Party Assessor Organizations (C3PAOs) in the fall of 2020. These are the organizations that will be allowed to assess a contractor to verify they have met the CMMC standards. That process has been delayed and at the time of this writing, only three assessors have been authorized for the almost 50,000 anticipated contractors in need of assessment with 181 C3PAOs still pending.

That likely means a delay in the implementation of CMMC-AB's original goals to certify 1500 contractors in 2021, 7500 by 2022, and 25,000 by 2023. If the delay allows you to breathe a sigh of relief, don't relax for too long. There is no communication from the DoD that they are backing off the CMMC standard. Not only that, but the DoE and DHS are making noise that they will adopt the standard in the next few years as well, so take the reprieve as an opportunity to get started if you haven't already. If you haven't written your SSP for the NIST 800-171, start there. If you've completed the NIST 800-171 self-assessment, continue working on completing your POAM items to be fully implemented. If you've completed your POAM action items, start working on your CMMC level requirements.

There are different ways to get the CMMC controls

implemented. You can work with an outside vendor or create a role inside your organization to assist you. Either way, my advice is to start as soon as possible and dedicate at least 20-40 hours per month to CMMC progress. This is what I call "deep work" because of the verbose policies that need to be interpreted, implemented, and documented. If you try to hand this off to a non-technical person and allow them less than 20 hours per month, they will likely lose track of previous progress gains and end up frustrated and confused. An IT or technical person with good language skills is the ideal candidate, but they need to be empowered to make changes to IT environments or they too will hit roadblocks.

The model that has worked best for our customers has been a marriage between outsourced IT and a project with shared responsibility around policy creation. As we work through the policies, we find best-fit

technology solutions and implement them. This way you are able to make methodical gains toward implementation and build the evidence and documentation of those changes along the way.

When looking for a good partner for your CMMC project, ensure it is listed as a Registered Partner Organization (RPO) on the CMMC-AB website marketplace. Getting listed requires special training and a Registered Practitioner (RP) on staff. Once you've identified some candidates, get clarity on pricing, milestones, and timelines before you proceed. If they have a short timeline on the order of days or weeks, run the other way.

I wish I had better news to share on the cost in time and dollars to get compliant with CMMC, but it's a big job and requires real effort. The benefit of making the changes required in the CMMC are the non-trivial improvements in cybersecurity you will experience in your organization. It's difficult to put a price on preventing the next ransomware attack or damage to reputation from a data exfiltration, but these are precisely the kind of incidents that CMMC hopes to thwart.

Questions about complying with cybersecurity requirements should be directed to an IT professional. Good luck on your journey! •

Jonathan Sandmel is President of Steady Networks, RPO and can be reached at procurement@steadynetworks.com or 505-375-1975.



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- Free both space (note area selection in categories below).

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BRONZE continued



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