



Gaining 'competitive advantage' in contracting



Mary Scott Nabers, President/CEO Strategic Partnerships, Inc.

Successful government sales teams know the value of hard-to-come-by information, budget data, planning documents and historical records.

So, the question becomes...what is the best way for sales teams to get this kind of valuable information? There are many ways and numerous strategies for information gathering but sometimes the best way is to formally ask for it.

MORE

IN THIS ISSUE

- Civil works projects get \$4.6M
\$93M goes to wind energy projects
Federal Web site has limitations
Stimulus news briefs
What the states are doing
Follow the money
State recovery Web sites
ARRA - Text of the Act
Procurement and advocacy services

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Civil works projects get \$4.6 million in ARRA funds

Construction, operation/maintenance projects dominate activities
Civil works projects totaling \$4.6 million were recently released by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

"In addition to the opportunity to help the nation and her citizens recover from this time of economic hardship," said John Paul Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, "the Corps will be able to use these funds to accomplish work on water resources projects that will benefit the nation for years to come."

Corps officials say they intend to put citizens to work on the projects quickly throughout the nation while at the same time improving the country's water resource projects over the long term. The Corps list of recovery projects is expected to create or maintain more than 57,000 direct construction industry jobs and more than 64,000 indirect jobs in firms supplying goods and services for the construction as well as the businesses that support them.

The projects include nearly 180 construction projects, nearly 900 operation and maintenance projects, 45 Mississippi River and tributaries projects, 67 investigations projects, and nine projects under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). No project on the lists is a new start.

The Corps made its allocation of Recovery Act construction funds based on the economic and environmental return of its ongoing projects. All of the projects had to meet congressional criteria: be obligated and executed quickly; result in high, immediate employment; have little schedule risk; be executed by contract or direct hire of temporary labor; and complete a project phase, a project, an element, or provide a useful service that does not require additional funding.

The myriad of projects is spread throughout all areas of the country.

To view the projects list, click HERE and look under RECENT REPORTS.

\$93M in renewable energy projects get funding boost

Money to support wind energy projects, renewable energy laboratory

Renewable energy projects are getting a boost from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Energy Secretary Steven Chu recently announced that \$93 million in the federal economic stimulus funds will be used to support wind energy projects. Additionally, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory will receive more than \$100 million in ARRA funds.

One of the goals of the economic stimulus program is to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy resources to decrease the nation's dependence on foreign oil. This \$93 million infusion of funds into the wind energy industry will help continue the development of this renewable energy source.

The funds will leverage the Department of Energy's national laboratories, universities and the private sector to help improve reliability and overcome technical challenges for the wind industry. The outcome will be creation of more "green" jobs and increased renewable energy generation.

With the Obama administration seeking to generate 10 percent of the nation's electricity from renewable sources by 2012, funding for these projects will "advance wind technology so that it can reliably supply a substantial portion of our nation's electricity," said Chu.

The announced funding includes \$45 million for wind turbine drivetrain research and development testing, \$14 million for technology improvement, \$24 million for wind power research and development and \$10 million for the National Wind Technology Center.

Some of the goals of the projects include producing dependable and effective hardware for utility scale wind turbines; improve the quality and use of lighter weight, advanced materials for turbine blades, towers and other components; and provide for developing up to three consortia between universities and industry to focus on wind energy challenges.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory will receive \$68 million for a research support facility, \$92 million for renewable energy and site infrastructure and \$13.5 million for upgrades to the Integrated Biorefinery Research Facility.

Recovery Web site won't show contracts until October

Officials say lack of data storage space will also cause problems

State and local governments aren't the only ones dealing with not having ample technological means for keeping up with the transparency requirements regarding monitoring and reporting how their federal stimulus funds are being spent. The federal government's recovery Web site, www.recovery.gov, faces lack of data storage space to provide all of the information being sought.

At a recent congressional hearing, officials said details on grants and contracts on the federal site might not be available until October, and Earl Devaney, chair of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, said having the spending data then will be a formidable task.

Each of the states, too, has a Web site dedicated to the federal stimulus funding, but the depth and breadth of the information on each varies.

Stimulus news briefs

Innovative business solutions being offered

With billions of federal dollars headed to local governments throughout the country, several large technology companies are looking at innovative financial solutions to ensure the funds do indeed stimulate the economy.

One major technology company is making \$2 billion in financing available for technology companies to launch technology projects now that are expected to get American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding in the future. Such public-private partnerships include projects like health information and smart grid technology.

Another business law firm has published a guide to federal clean energy funding from the ARRA. The guide is said to review the various programs and sources of funding for clean energy companies and projects - in wind, solar, biofuels, smart grid, transmission, green building, energy efficiency and more.

D.C. facing lack of skilled workers

With \$500 million in grants about to become available for training workers to participate in the "greening" of America, Washington, D.C., may be behind the curve. A large number of under-skilled workers populate the area, making the district's ability to compete for this grant funding a negative.

Pennsylvania county creates its own stimulus
Montgomery County in Philadelphia is creating its own economic stimulus, as officials there prepare to spend \$20 million of their own funds over the next year.

Texas ports get more money than they asked for
Rarely do you get more from the federal government than you asked for, but it happened in Texas. Texas lawmakers requested \$103 million of economic stimulus funding for the Houston and Galveston ports.

Michigan likely to patch budget with ARRA funds
The fate of the state's automakers in Michigan is playing a major role in an expected \$1.3 billion budget deficit. State lawmakers are anticipating that most of the shortfall will be filled with federal economic stimulus money.

States may seek funds to monitor stimulus dollars
Like many other states, Colorado is finding keeping up with the federal stimulus money headed its way to be a headache. Colorado officials say their nearly 20-year-old database system is too outdated to monitor the billions of dollars coming into the state.

Maybe we don't need those machine guns after all
The Harris County (Texas) sheriff is not likely to get his machine guns from ARRA funding after all, and a helicopter program proposal has been scaled back.

Virginia's Carroll County will use a U.S. Department of Agriculture \$1.2 million grant and a low-interest federal loan of \$5 million to construct a new regional water system to serve more than 300 homes and businesses in a new development in the county.

Alaska has accepted more than \$929 million in federal stimulus money, despite Gov. Sarah Palin's early opposition to some of the funding saying it would only increase the nation's debt.

Colorado's National Renewable Energy Laboratory will see at least \$110 million from the federal economic stimulus package. The laboratory focuses on research into renewable and alternative energy technologies.

Florida will look to ARRA funding for youth job programs whose goal is to create more than 2,500 jobs in the Tampa Bay area for adults up to 24 years old.

California is finding that even some small government entities can apply for and receive stimulus funds. Los Gatos, whose population is approximately 30,000, was awarded \$529,000 for street improvements.

Massachusetts, which will receive some \$8.7 billion in federal recovery funds, plans to use some of those funds for \$114 million in projects that will improve the Silver Line services and speed traffic on the busiest bus corridor in Boston.

Delaware's Wilmington station, the 11th busiest Amtrak system in the country, will use its \$20 million in economic stimulus funding to restore the building's exterior, add new concrete curbing and make the building compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Pennsylvania's Fox Chase Cancer Center will benefit from more than \$200,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to be used for medical research.

Texas will see more than \$600 million in federal stimulus dollars to build a new hospital and behavioral health center at Fort Hood, the world's largest Army post.

Nevada plans to use \$26.4 million in Bureau of Land Management stimulus funds for nearly four dozen projects that range from renewable energy investments to habitat restoration, infrastructure development and capital improvements.

Minnesota's Richfield Police Department will purchase night-vision binoculars, drug-detection dogs and a SWAT van from the more than \$171,000 the department received in ARRA funding.

Follow the money

Money distributed to reduce hazardous fuels

More than 100 hazardous fuels reduction and ecosystem improvement projects funded by the federal economic stimulus bill will share \$224 million in funding. All of the projects are located on forest lands in more than 26 states and territories.

"These projects provide benefits to current and future generations, including improved water quality and quality, healthy forests that provide clean air, and recreation opportunities while reducing wildfire risks," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Stimulus funding will help accelerate biofuels research
To assist with efforts to reduce energy consumption and thus the nation's dependence on foreign countries for fuel, nearly \$800 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding has been announced to accelerate biofuels research and commercialization.

"Developing the next generation of biofuels is key to our effort to end our dependence on foreign oil and address the climate crisis - while creating millions of new jobs that can't be outsourced," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu said.

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DoE) Biomass Program will use its national laboratories, universities and the private sector to help improve biofuels reliability and overcome key technical challenges.

The funding represents both new funding from the ARRA as well as money from existing projects. For more information on the four main areas across which the funds will be spread, click HERE and look under RECENT REPORTS.

\$424 million in DOJ grants will assist local law enforcement

Saving and creating jobs is the goal of the more than \$424 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding recently announced for some 20 states, territories and the District of Columbia.

The funds can be used for such items as support for drug and grant task force activities, expansion of domestic violence shelter staffs, funding for community crime prevention and treatment programs, equipment purchases, crime victim and witness programs and more.

650 Bureau of Land Management projects approved for funding
More than 650 Bureau of Land Management projects throughout the country will share \$305 million from the federal economic stimulus bill. The projects are intended to restore landscapes and habitat, boost renewable energy development on public lands and create jobs.

The funding includes \$41 million for development and transmission of renewable energy on public lands, \$100 million for projects that protect treasured landscapes (habitat restoration, cleanup of abandoned mines, construct and repair recreational trails, repair and restore non-motorized trails, hire Youth Corps members for trail maintenance jobs and construct safety shelters on national trails) and construction, maintenance and energy efficiency improvements on bureau properties.

For more information about these and other funding opportunities, contact Reagan Weil or Richard Hartmann at 512-531-3900.

Local, state governments could benefit from proposal

Legislation would allow local governments to use GSA award schedules

Legislation expected to be filed soon in the U.S. House would, if passed, allow state and local governments to use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to purchase products and services through the General Service Administration's (GSA) multiple award schedules.

Other national news
Six universities receive \$13M from DOE for projects
Six cost-shared University Advanced Combustion and Emissions Controls research and development projects will share in \$13 million in U.S. Department of Energy funding.

The research projects will contribute to the development of high efficiency internal combustion engines with the goals of improving fuel economies by 20-40% in light-duty vehicles and attaining 55% brake thermal efficiency in heavy-duty engine systems.

Recipients include the University of Connecticut, Michigan Technological University, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Houston and the University of Wisconsin.

Huge mass transit project in Jersey to employ thousands

Residents of New Jersey next month will be witness to the nation's biggest mass transit construction project in recent years when an \$8.7 billion project to build rail tunnels under the Hudson River to link New Jersey to Manhattan.

Calendar of Events
DOE offers online course on school energy savings
The U.S. Department of Energy is offering a free, two-hour Web-based training course to help building professionals implement the recommendations in the Advanced Energy Design Guide for K-12 school buildings.

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All 50 states have own recovery Web sites

All 50 of the states and the District of Columbia now have their own "recovery" sites where citizens can track where ARRA dollars are being spent in their respective states.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is an unprecedented infusion of \$787 billion into a flailing United States economy. The ARRA is designed to create or save millions of jobs and to address pressing needs throughout the country, from education to infrastructure.

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