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Afghanistan Engineer District Holds Contractors' Open House

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Afghanistan Engineer District

Kabul, Afghanistan – Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) held its fourth Contractors' Open House today. The first open house was held in August 2005 and now is in demand with local and international contractors doing construction in Afghanistan.

“Very, very good for us...we recommend to all contractors” said Nazir Hajizada, Engineer and Managing Director, Nawee Bakhtar Construction Company. Nazir Hajizada was one of the more than 160 contractors representing 70 Afghan and international firms participating in the open house. Hajizada and some of the other representatives are repeat customers who find the open house a great opportunity to network with current and future AED contractors.



Col. Bulen talks with Sayed Akram, Engineer with SBS Construction Co. during a break.

District Commander Colonel William E. Bulen and his staff hosted the day long event at a local hotel. The open house included presentations on how to do business with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the types of contracts open for award this fiscal year and the district's expectations for contractor work. Col Bulen told the audience “it is not easy working for AED. We have high standards for construction. We are confident that you can achieve these standards.”

The District's primary focus is to facilitate the construction, reconstruction and infrastructure development of Afghanistan. AED works with U.S., Coalition, Afghan National Security Forces Programs, U.S. Agency for International Development and government agencies to deliver high quality, timely, world-class construction and engineering solutions not only to Afghanistan, but also across Central Asia.

Col. Bulen told the group that the district will require contractors to hire, train and mentor local Afghan workers as a means to grow the Afghanistan national

engineering capacity. Among the other items Col. Bulen stressed, were worksite safety, adherence to the agreed upon work schedule, conformance to quality standards and the need for open and honest communication.

“Safety was very hard” said Nazir Hajizada in respect to safety practices him and his partner learned from managing two AED projects Nawe Bakhtar Construction Company was awarded. “We had a hard time getting them to wear hard hats, boots and all – this is very good” Hajizada continued.

Deputy District Engineer for Program Management Deborah Duncan explained to the group that the district will be awarding multiple contracts in the near term and additional contracts before the end of the fiscal year totaling near six-hundred facilities. The total value of the contracts is over \$ 1 billion.

Mrs. Duncan provided insight into the capacity building AED is investing in Afghanistan, mentoring the contractors after contract award, the economic impacts on the 40% unemployment rate and economic benefits to skilled and unskilled workers.

Mrs. Duncan informed the audience of the shift in programs to smaller projects for the Afghan National Police (ANP) facilities. ANP facilities require less of a foot print in one location than the Afghan National Army. The main difference between the army and the police is the ANP are located on all points of the map. This, like the “Capacity Building”, lends well to the small to medium sized companies. To date, 80% of the contracts awarded for ANP facilities are to Afghan owned companies.

The activity is viewed as a huge success by the attendees. It gave the contractors a chance to meet the District Commander, to learn first hand the District’s mission and to learn how to conduct business with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Col Bulen’s closing comment coined the approach AED takes on each of the endeavors – “We know the capacity of the Afghan people is here – we support you – success is in your hands.”

For further information about the US Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan, visit www.aed.usace.army.mil