

## Homeland Security and SPAWAR Business Opportunities in San Diego

By Brian Blazevic

Since September 11, companies large and small are considering ways to get involved in national defense and homeland security. With SPAWAR headquarters and numerous military R&D and testing centers, San Diego is an ideal place to take advantage of defense and crisis and consequence management needs. While companies like SAIC and Titan are proficient with Department of Defense contracts, many of San Diego's smaller high-tech and biotech firms aren't.

SPAWAR, the military's information technology center, is committed to streamlining and modernizing the contracting process, which was highlighted at the "SPAWAR & Industry" conference from October 31 to November 2. The annual event was a collaboration between the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) and SPAWAR. Military and industry representatives from across the country learned about national defense opportunities and SPAWAR's future needs. The demand for communications technology was emphasized. Tom Ridge, as director of the Office of Homeland Security, will need to manage effective communications for the 43 agencies under him.

As part of SPAWAR's initiatives, the contracting process is now electronic end-to-end. Companies can submit proposals and monitor their status online, review current RFPs, view bidder's lists, and learn about the evolving needs of SPAWAR. For a comprehensive list of business opportunities at SPAWAR San Diego and Charleston, South Carolina, visit <http://commerce.spawar.navy.mil>. The NDIA is another good source for learning about national defense needs (<http://www.ndia-sd.org>).

There are many opportunities for small businesses, too. Julie Krnc, director of SPAWAR's Small Business Office, said \$636 million worth of prime small business contracts were awarded in fiscal year 2001. Barb Welch, Director of Business Development for the San Diego office of AU-SYSTEM, and about 50 other small business representatives, came to learn about opportunities for their companies. Information about SPAWAR small business programs can be found at <http://enterprise.spawar.navy.mil/spawarpublicsite/programs/index.htm>, then click on SPAWAR Small Business Office.

There are other ways San Diego small businesses can take advantage of Department of Defense needs aside from direct military contracts. The Center for the Commercialization of Advanced Technology (CCAT) is a collaborative organization between industry, academia and the military to fast-track technology development for national defense. Companies can apply for a range of services, including commercial feasibility studies, market analysis, prototyping, testing and evaluation. CCAT is a joint effort between UCSD CONNECT, UCSD Jacobs School, SDSU Foundation and Entrepreneurial Management Center, and ORINCON Corporation International, with support from SPAWAR San Diego. Visit <http://www.ccatsandiego.org> for more information.

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